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Calvinist Contact

A Reformed Weekly

MAY 24, 1991/46th year of publication/No. 2261

Special Insert
What happened at CRC Synod 1990?

In this issue:

This issue probes the relation of the Bible to science. How do we sort through this question? . . . pp. 10-14

★ ★ ★

A special 4-page insert carries the reflections of Howard D. Vanderwell, President of CRC Synod 1990, on what happened at this crucial synod.

Thinkbit:

If people listened to themselves more often, they would talk less.

Source unknown

Christian students in B.C. public high school lead sex education presentation, are asked for encore

Photo: Courtesy Maple Ridge Community Church

Duane Goerzen, youth pastor of Maple Ridge, B.C., (Mennonite Brethren) Community Church: Christian kids in public schools can have an impact.

Marian Van Til

MAPLE RIDGE, B.C. — There's a right way and a wrong way to present sex education to teenagers, and the youth pastor and young people of Maple Ridge Community (Mennonite Brethren) Church think they've come up with the right way.

But they've seen the wrong way, which is what motivated them to develop an alternative.

British Columbia public schools use teaching material called the "Family Life Curriculum"; once a year they hold a Family Life Conference during which schools bring in local speakers to discuss "family life" matters, among them sexuality.

Last year, Christian students at Maple Ridge Senior Secondary School who are members of Community Church complained to their pastor, Dean Richmond, and their 24-year-old youth pastor, Duane Goerzen, that the school-sponsored sex education presentation by a local doctor was "perverted." Handing out condoms to Grade 11 and 12 students, displaying fluorescent condoms and using various sexual props were among the things the students found offensive.

'This is brutal'

Goerzen says, "Some of the kids came to me and said, 'This is brutal what's going on in our school. What can we do about this?' So together we made an appointment with the teacher responsible."

"We were going to ask for equal time," continues Goerzen, "but God was really at work there. [The teacher] offered it to us before we asked!" So when this year's Family Life Conference came around, Goerzen and the students were ready with something different.

That's how a public secondary school became the setting for Christian students leading a one-hour presentation on sexual abstinence. It was "the best received of all the presentations," notes Goerzen with enthusiasm. "You know when you're boring kids to tears and when you're really exciting them, and they were really with us." The church gave its presentation three times to a total of almost 700 Grade 11 and 12 students.

Relationships are the key

What did those students find so exciting about discussing abstinence? "We presented stuff no one was talking to them about," explains Goerzen. "We started with a funny skit on relationships to break the ice, then went into a humourous dialogue commenting on it. That led into a presentation of how the secular media have presented a false image of sexuality, how the media have lied to us. 'How many of you ever hear about the consequences of sleeping around, of all kinds of sexually transmitted diseases, of the number of times condoms fail? for example,' we asked the kids," Goerzen says. Statistics were cited to make their points.

"That led to talk about relationships. We told kids, 'Just because you're having sex with someone that doesn't mean you have a relationship,'" Goerzen continues. "We talked about 'package power': how we dress, how we look to attract people, how we smell, what we surround ourselves with (like some guys with their cars), how people see us on the outside. We made them realize that all that is external; it doesn't let someone know the real you."

Goerzen says the school "told us we couldn't talk values and morals — but we did; we just didn't say where those values came from and were careful not to 'preach' in that setting. We couldn't talk about the ramifications of sin, for example, and call it that — though we wanted to."

The presentation was so well-received by students, teachers, and even by a school board member, that the Maple Ridge Community Church group was asked to come again and has been approached by other schools as well. Since then they've done a presentation on substance abuse at another area secondary school. "The principal of one of the schools told us, 'We trust you guys,'" notes Goerzen with gratitude.

"A person could do this full-time but we simply don't have time for that," he admits. Goerzen has led the presentations along with either a Bible school-graduate friend of his, Ray Cymbaluk, or with Pastor Richmond. Goerzen, who graduated two years ago from Briarcrest Bible College in Saskatchewan, works with some 60 teenagers who "are spread between four different local public high schools." The kids meet in home groups — small support groups — and once a month for a group activity session which they call a "Mega-rad."

When Goerzen and the other adults do have time, they'll bring their presentation to some of the other area schools. "We're right here next to Vancouver," he explains. "We'd like to do a few in Vancouver. And we'll go back to this same school [Maple Ridge Senior Secondary] next year with similar stuff."

Human chain links three Vancouver abortuaries

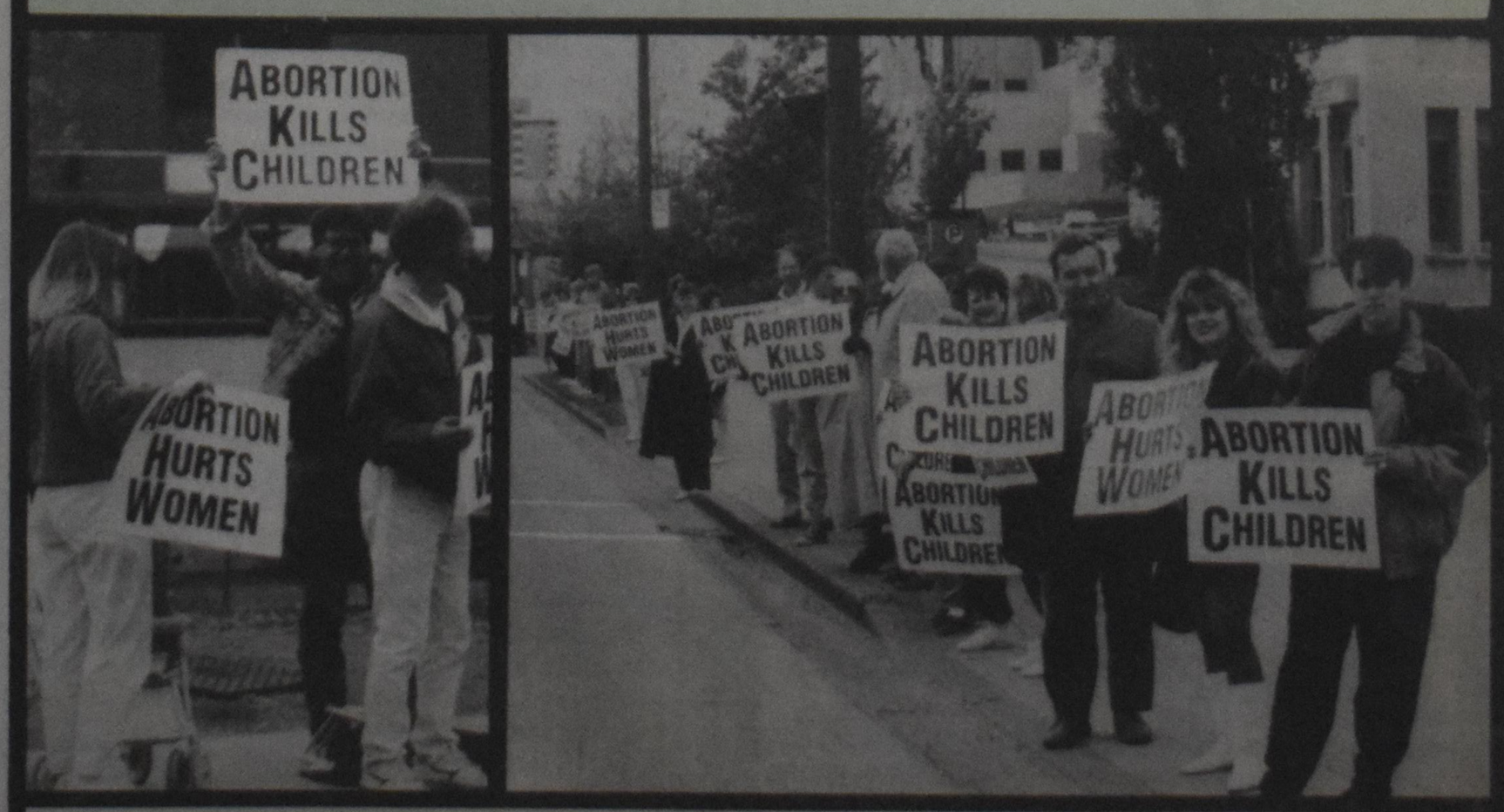
Bert Witvoet

VANCOUVER — The Vancouver Life Chain held on Mother's Day was a big success, says organizer John Den Haan. An estimated 8,000 people representing 160 churches and individuals linked three Vancouver abortuaries for over 10 kilometres. All participants carried one of two signs: "Abortion kills children" and "Abortion hurts women." The chain held for 1-1/2 hours and brought together people of all ages, races and faiths.

The latest strategy of forming life chains started in California, according to Den Haan, who is a member of the New Westminster Christian Reformed Church.

The only thing that marred the otherwise peaceful demonstration was an incident in which a pro-choice woman turned on her lawnsprinkler, soaking a number of demonstrators standing on the sidewalk in front of her house. Police ordered the woman to move the sprinkler.

According to John Den Haan a North-America-wide life chain will be held on Oct. 6 this year.



Left: members of the New Westminster CRC; right: members of the Hope Community CRC in Surrey.

Photos: Courtesy Frank Kooger

News

Federal court ruling in Luitjens case expected soon

Stan deJong

OTTAWA — It appears that Mr. Justice Frank Collier of the Federal Court of Canada may finally make a ruling concerning Jacob Luitjens, a convicted Nazi collaborator.

On May 11, it was two years ago that Judge Collier adjourned the Luitjens hearing to review the evidence and consider his decision.

Luitjens, a native of the Netherlands, is now 72 years old and lives in Vancouver. In 1948 he was convicted *in absentia* in the Netherlands of collaborating with the Germans; he was sentenced to life imprisonment. The Canadian federal government alleges Luitjens lied about his Nazi past when he entered this country 30 years ago (see C.C. June 9, 1989).

Judge Collier's verdict may lead to Luitjens losing his Canadian citizenship and to his subsequent deportation. Luitjens could be the first Canadian deported for war crimes.

The long delay in the case has been a source of frustration and embarrassment for many, including members of the federal war crimes unit, various Jewish groups and the legal community. But according to *The Toronto Star* (May 11, '91), a resolution to the case may finally be in sight. Associate Chief Justice James Jerome said in an interview that Judge Collier told him that a final version in English is almost ready for (French) translation.

Jack Silverstone, general counsel for the Canadian Jewish Congress, told *The Star* it is clear the war crimes unit views this as a test case. He noted that the government has not taken any new action against suspected Nazis for 17 months while the Luitjens case has been on hold.

U.K. passes War Crimes Act

Meanwhile, in Britain, the Queen has given formal assent to a law permitting the prosecution of alleged war criminals.

Prime Minister John Major's Conservative government used special powers to bypass the House of Lords and send the legislation directly to the Queen.

In 1948, Winston Churchill urged parliament not to act as it has now done. Churchill said, "Retributive persecution is, of all policies, the most pernicious."

After years of non-action, war crimes returned to the British political agenda in 1986 when officials were given a list of 17 suspected Nazis by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, which tracks down Nazi war criminals.

Neo-Nazi computer games coming into Canada

Stan de Jong

TORONTO — Lisa Priest of *The Toronto Star* (May 11, 1991) reports that the Canadian government has been asked to ban imports of computer games that put players in the role of concentration camp commanders who win by gassing the most Jews.

According to Sol Littman, Canadian representative of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre for the Holocaust Studies, the "racist and anti-Semitic" games are widely circulating in Germany, Austria and Holland. Unless they are banned by Canada Customs, there is nothing to stop them from being imported into Canada.

The games, Littman told Priest, appear to be like "Monopoly" or other financial games but instead have players trading in human lives. The object of one game is to sell the human remains of Jews so gas can be purchased to kill more Jews. Once Jews are gassed, the player is given a sales office that bears the message, "Spread it all over the world." Players are then able to sell the body parts of Jews to be used as dog food and their skin for lampshades.

The games, sold in Germany since 1986, are aimed at elementary and high school students too young to remember the Holocaust, Littman said.

Rick Eaton, a Wiesenthal Centre Researcher in Los Angeles, said the games sell the Aryan philosophy of one pure race of fair-haired, blue-eyed people. He purchased eight of the games on floppy disks for $20 in Europe's underground market. He said the games originate in Germany and are easily copied onto a floppy disk. "I brought them through (Canadian) customs...and nobody bothered me," he noted.

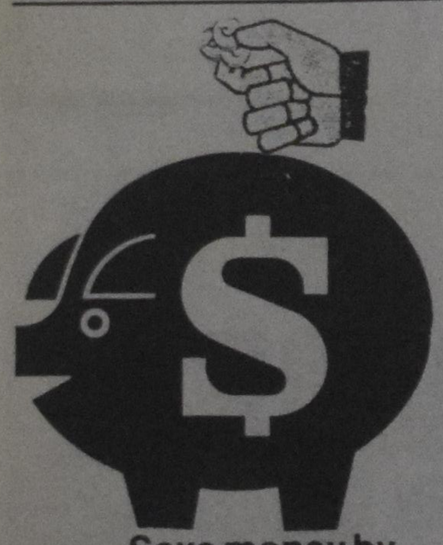
Introducing a new farm column

With this issue, *Calvinist Contact* introduces another new column and columnist, *Rural Routes* by Maynard Vander Galien.

Maynard operates a 420-acre dairy and cash-crop farm near Ottawa and is involved in many local community activities. He is director of his county's Victoria Order Of Nurses, is secretary of the local co-op store, director and public relations chairperson of the County Federation of Agriculture, is involved in an agricultural awareness committee, waste management committee and 4-H.

Maynard's monthly column will cover a broad range of agriculture-related subjects, some analytical, some more personal or whimsical.

We welcome his contributions as a columnist and encourage you to read them, even if — or perhaps especially if — you're a city person.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Maynard Vander Galien

The farmer takes a wife — or is it *The Wife?*

The Ottawa Valley is unique for its many unusual expressions and slang terms — such as "G'day, g'day," a greeting often used by valley folks. Or "eh," a word added to the end of many questions.

A young woman who lives in Cornwall, Ont., and who worked in this area one summer, mentioned to me that everybody around here is a "lad." She gave some examples: "The old lad is getting married again. We hired a couple of lads for a day and got all the straw in the mow. She married a lad that's good for nothin'."

A phrase that I find repugnant is "The Wife," used by many husbands here (and I'm sure elsewhere in Canada) when referring to their wives. This commonly used expression is prevalent among rural working-class men, particularly farmers and construction workers. However, I even hear men in business refer to "The Wife." "The Wife and I go to Florida for a few weeks each winter." Or "The Wife does the books."

Another piece of property?

Even some Dutch immigrant men refer to their wives in this manner. Maybe they are used to the Dutch expression "de vrouw" as in "de vrouw van de dominee." That has a nice little ring to it, I guess. However, it's just not the same when translated to "The Wife," which sounds harsh and crude.

Being a bachelor I look at married life with a critical eye. What seems to go unnoticed to married people can make an impression on me. I cringe each time I hear someone say "The Wife." It makes me want to blurt out, "The Dog, The Cat, and The Wife."

A city couple who moved out to a rural area still chuckle in amazement when they tell me the story of a farmer who lives about a mile away from them. The man, a church-going person, always referred to his wife as "Her," "She" or "The Wife." He would say, "She gets John and Mary ready for school while I feed the cattle. Then The Wife and I sit down and eat breakfast."

When introducing his wife, the husband would say, "This is The Wife and these are our children, John and Mary."

"It was two years before we found out she had a name," said the astonished couple.

I have even heard teenage boys refer to their girlfriends as "The Wife." They must have learned it from their fathers. Thus it passes from generation to generation.

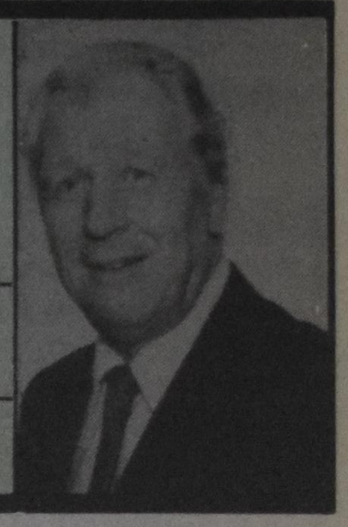
The term "The Wife" is often used in slang and has a possessive connotation. It is similar to the term "Little Woman," an affectionate phrase not quite as common but more respectful.

Permit me to ask those husbands who use this expression to reflect on why you refer to your wife in this way? And it puzzles me why so many wives seem resigned to the fact that their husbands refer to them in this manner. How would husbands feel if their wives referred to them as "He," "Him," or "The Husband?" Is it truly showing the respect and affection that your wife deserves from you? Come on now fellows! Don't you think your wife deserves to be called by her real name? (eh?) G'day!

Maynard Vander Galien owns and operates a farm in the Ottawa Valley, Ontario.

Pressreview

Carl D. Tuyl



The political armchair politicians have had their way with the Speech from the Throne. It was praised, criticized, analysed, debated, dissected, despised and exalted, which is a common reaction to Speeches from the Throne — and sermons. The Opposition has pre-fabricated critique and the press picks and chooses. The *Vancouver Sun* headlined: "Wife-beaters placed on Alert." It was, as expected, an apple pie and motherhood document with which no one really could disagree. My reaction is a limerick one:

Mister Spicer went from city to city
and now Monsieur — oh what pity
thinks we haven't had enough of this unity stuff
and treats us to another committee.

Anyway, it was nice to see Mr. Ramon Hnatyshyn attired and treated with all that splendid regalia. Now that the noon hour canon in Ottawa has been silenced and people attend weddings in sneakers and ecclesiastical gatherings in blue jeans, it gladdens this deep-down conservative royalist to see a bit of pomp and circumstance.

★ ★ ★

The country was in a tizzy about the one-two-three admittance of Saddam Hussein's crony Mohammed Mashat into Canada. We knew that the immigration department needed to speed up its process, but this was a bit too speedy for a lot of people. In the House, the government went into Houdini contortions to explain the haste with which the welcome mat had been rolled out. Monsieur offered the sacrifice of an official at External Affairs to satisfy the NDPers and Liberals, but they wanted no part of it. It appears that some rather well-placed Conservatives cashed in some IOUs and pulled rank on behalf of Mr. Mashat by telephone. The old adage remains applicable: It is not what you know, it's who....

★ ★ ★

The times they are a-changing and the country with them. We saw pictures of the first turbaned Mountie (looked like a regular cop to me); liturgical experts perform hymnectomies on trusty old psalters; we find out that the garbage which we so nonchalantly used to put on our front lawn winds up in somebody's back yard; and now, lo and behold, a Baptist (yes, a Baptist) finds that it is no longer necessary for all people to swear on the Bible in court. Roger Smith, associate executive minister for the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, is right of course; but all these changes make a lot of people engage in their reverse gear in the misplaced opinion that the good ol' days were really good.

★ ★ ★

Canadian truckers, who on normal days already clog up the highways considerably, went on an obstruction protest in and around Toronto. The city traffic was as stuck as a kitchen drain with two dead mice in it. The truckers have a point, though; they have to compete with the American transport industry, which operates on about half the expenses of its Canadian counterpart. Pity, though, the people who got stuck in traffic jams.

★ ★ ★

Premier Bourassa's Liberals tabled a piece of legislation in the National Assembly that would enable a referendum on sovereignty. The draft bill does not make the inevitability of a referendum something chiseled in stone, and neither does it fix the date with certainty. It is Mr. Bourassa's trump card, and he wants to see whether the rest of Canada has any trump left at all. Frere Jacques Parizeau was not fooled and condemned the move as simply political.

★ ★ ★

First prize for political courage (or naivete?) goes to Premier Cameron, who with a majority of one in the 26-seat Nova Scotia legislature dared to table the country's toughest budget yet and managed to offend: the Opposition, doctors, teachers, nurses, civil servants and seniors. No mean feat! Mr. Cameron is experiencing again that everybody is in favour of cutting back on expenses as long as it means a reduction in the other fellow's income.

★ ★ ★

Toronto has been ranked by the Geneva-based International Information and Consulting Form as the most expensive city in North America, an "honour" it shares with New York. Last time I was in Geneva I was charged $2.75 for a small glass of orange juice. So did these guys look next door? I guess they did, for world-wide, Toronto stood in 21st place, making it relatively cheap when compared with many European cities where they charge you half an arm and three-quarters of a leg for a miniature cup of coffee.

★ ★ ★

Our gracious Queen was in Washington where the Yankees, with great enthusiasm and gusto, repented for having removed the English monarchy 215 years ago. President Bush (who is very tall) blamed the chief of protocol for an oversight which left Queen Elizabeth (who is very short) looking on the podium like a chicadee that came half way out of a bird house, or as a Reuters report put it, "a talking mushroom."

★ ★ ★

And there is another woman in office: France's President Francois Mitterand gave the heave-to to Prime Minister Michel Rochard and appointed Madame Edith Cresson in his place. Madame prime minister has a nice sound to it, doesn't it? The move was generally considered to be pro-European and enforcing the socialist, left-wing stance of the country's government. Another item of emancipation was cited by *The Globe and Mail* which reported that Maria Wittek, who joined the Polish army in 1917, had been promoted to the rank of general at the age of 92.

★ ★ ★

Here is a cute case of union busting: Rolls-Royce dismissed its whole work force and then offered to employ them anew the next day. In a letter to all employees the company explained that by just showing up the workers declared their agreement with the company's wage freeze and job cuts. That's a new one.

★ ★ ★

There is a global warming not only in the atmosphere but also in diplomatic relations. Moscow and Tel Aviv are getting closer, which is no wonder for the greatest bloc of ethnic population in Israel is from the Soviet Union. China and Taiwan are cozying up to each other like shy lovers on a bench, and China's Communist Party chief is also meeting with President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The political situation in Yugoslavia is teetering on the brink of civil war. The country is without a head of state and the Croatians and Serbs are finding it impossible to live together in political unity. Sound familiar? Blacks in South Africa are also showing a definite predilection for fratricide rather than unity. Zulu raiders of the Inkatha Freedom Party are continuing their bloody raids in the country's townships and squatters camps. The anti-apartheid movement is being damaged severely by the cruelties that blacks inflict upon each other. The six-year jail term for Winnie Mandela does not help the movement a whole lot either.

★ ★ ★

Volvo Netherlands, a sort of crown corporation in which the government of the Netherlands had 70 per cent of the shares, sold half of them to who else but the Japanese. Half the world is in hock to the Japanese.

★ ★ ★

Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus of the Netherlands visited Germany, the first royal visitors since East and West Germany were united. The *Algemeen Dagblad* also reports that the natural gas reserve in Holland is 250 billion cubic meters more than was previously estimated. Nice little nest egg!

★ ★ ★

Prince Charles, used to palatial surroundings as he is, and who earlier criticized England's architects for building these utilitarian structures, has now aimed his royal ire at Britain's educators. He accuses them of "marginalizing Shakespeare."

★ ★ ★

Mother's Day came and went with a lot of Hallmark drivel dripping from many sources, including no doubt, pulpits. B.S. detectors all over the country ran their batteries dry. The next run on family budgets will be on Father's Day next month. I pass. Just let me be.

★ ★ ★

Radishes are up in the garden, spinach also, onions are growing like weeds, snow peas are peeking through the soil, Fenelon Falls blackflies are making their get-away with half of my bodily substance, and people are kissing each other on the street in broad daylight. It must be spring.

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Some students may be hired when you call them. Please be patient. Sometimes they are hired before we can cancel their ad.

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Editorial

In spite of the news, don't be like Cain

I am reading today's newspaper and it strikes me how many murders people commit or think of committing. Let me just take a few snatches of first lines to show you what I mean.

"If wife-beaters can't be jailed, women should take the law into their own hands and kill them, says a leading women's activist."

"A cab thief blasted two Ontario Provincial Police officers with a shotgun, then ended an all-night stand-off by killing himself."

"A 22-year-old Metro man was beaten and kicked into a coma by a group of 'laughing' teens for allegedly stealing four beers from a party, witnesses and Metro police said."

"About 1,000 Zulus armed with spears and clubs rampaged through a squatter camp at dawn yesterday, hacking and burning at least 27 people to death."

"Homocide detectives are looking for the killer of a 64-year-old retired teacher who did volunteer work for the Daily Bread Bank."

"A backyard barbecue turned bloody Saturday night when an angry neighbour, upset by the noise, shot the host couple and one of their guests."

"A 2½-hour brawl between Mohawk factions on the Kahnawaka reserve late Saturday night sent one man to hospital."

"A 42-year-old woman found dead in her home is Durham region's sixth homicide victim of the year.... Her husband...has been charged with first-degree murder."

A sorry tale

These few stories represent only a tiny fraction of all the violent crimes that take place every day all over the world. But they tell an all too eloquent story of human hatred.

It seems that it is not enough that a recent cyclone and hurricanes killed thousands in Bangladesh and that floods and earthquakes and drought will continue to snuff out the life of millions of people. These are the so-called "natural" disasters or "acts of God." But human beings voluntarily or involuntarily add their own disasters in the form of wars, civil unrest, accidents, criminal activities, rowdiness and domestic disputes.

This editorial does not want to lament a condition that has been with us since Cain killed Abel. But it does want to prevent us from being dulled by the frequency of events that are at heart anti-creational and anti-normative. The way the newspapers report on these matters does not always help the reader retain a sense of normativity. Too much of the reporting takes on the character of entertainment news through the placement on front pages, the use of large headlines and the provision of too much detail. But the biggest culprit in making us desensitized is, of course, the fact that so many murders are actually committed.

A moral no-man's land

The best way for people to escape becoming callous and uncaring about killing is to pay attention to it as it takes root in their own lives in so many common ways. The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is being violated in its spirit so many times by all of us that it is a wonder that not more people end up actually killing each other.

Between the extreme acts of love and hatred there seems to lie a large strip of life that seems rather harmless and is difficult to classify as belonging to either one or the other. It's a kind of moral no man's land. Yet, somewhere in that land lies the border between loving and hating. It's an absolute border between areas of life that have totally opposing values and principles.

We often make the mistake of seeing this in-between land of our common-day experience as a neutral area, a land where good and bad gently rub elbows without causing too much friction. Hockey violence, for example is often seen as an innocent byproduct of an exciting sport. Anger in traffic is not a serious offense. It's understandable because that s.o.b. had no right to cut me off. Wounded pride at justified criticism is a normal thing to experience. Subliminal advertising is not a sign of hatred, is it? The societal eraser of conscience is always at work in this in-between land we call "reality."

Laying down your life

The way to escape that illusionary world is to focus on the meaning of love and to call everything else "hatred" and "killing" and "murder." To love means to "lay down your life" according to 1 John 3:16. As such "love" is the absolute opposite of "hate," which basically means "to take life." Jesus Christ showed what love means: He laid down his life for those who had fallen under the curse of hate. And he calls on his followers to lay down their lives for each other.

Laying down your life for someone can range anywhere from giving someone the biggest piece of cake, to acknowledging that that person was right, to giving up your cottage to another family, to devoting years of your life to someone ill, to actually dying for that person. The implications of love are never quite known ahead of time. But this is quite clear: love is never neutral and never causes anyone any harm. It is meant to give or enhance life rather than take or diminish it. As such it is the only antedote to all the reports of killing you read in the paper and to all the killings that will never be reported because they took place in the realm of the mind and the feelings.

Don't be discouraged by all the murders around you. Seek to nurture the flame of love in your own life and in those around you. Be prepared to lay down your life, not as a duty, but as an act of thanksgiving because someone much bigger than you laid down a much bigger life so that you might live and love.

BW

You may not be a da Vinci but you can do your best

William Slofstra

All Christians have unique, God-given abilities. Some believers, however, feel inferior because they don't have as much talent as someone else. None of us should think that way. God does not hold us unaccountable for what we do not have. He wants us to discover and develop the skills we do have. However, other people and sometimes we ourselves want to do more than we can. Consequently, we disappoint others and ourselves.

In this book, *Making the Most of Life*, J.P. Miller told about Leonardo da Vinci, the famous Renaissance artist. While da Vinci was still a pupil, his old and famous teacher asked him to finish a picture he had begun. Young da Vinci stood in such awe of his master's skill that at first he respectfully declined. But the old artist would accept no excuse. He simply said, "Do your best."

Trembling, da Vinci took the brush and began. With each careful stroke, his hand grew more steady as his eye "awoke with slumbering genius." Soon he had forgotten his timidity and was completely caught up in his work. When the painting was finished, the master was carried into the studio. There before him was a triumph of art. Embracing his student he exclaimed, "My son, I paint no more."

Leonardo's talent surfaced when he did his best with what he had. Children do best when we encourage and guide their God-given talents. Enthusiasm, inspiration displayed by teachers can help students to become what they are best in.

Of course, we cannot be a Leonardo da Vinci. But we don't have to be. In 1 Corinthians 4, the apostle Paul said, "It is required in stewards that one can be found faithful." That means doing our best and leaving the results with the one who gave us our talents; who knows, we may surprise ourselves.

Give your best to the Master;
give him first place in your heart or life,
in your teaching or classroom;
give him first place wherever you are.

Originally published in the Medicine Hat (Alta.) Christian School newsleter, Oct., 1990, under the title, "Do Your Best." William Slofstra is principal of that school.

Letters

A jewel with a flaw

The April 19 issue of *Calvinist Contact* was quite a jewel, filled with good articles. To name a few: the editorial "The Reformed community must and will change" — how true! the short story "Saying goodbye" by Jan de Bree — how tragic! and "What can we learn from the persecuted church?" by Richard Oostra — something to take to heart!

But then came the flaw: the letters to the editor. So often I miss love in those letters but I do notice sarcasm. Some writers point out that we have to go back to the Bible or turn back to the basics or to our roots. I would like to remind the readers and myself that there are many areas where the teachings of the Bible are not black and white, as, for example, with infant baptism. This teaching we deduce from different Scripture portions. How many angry words have been spent on this issue.

Let us not pretend that only we have the truth and the rest drifted away. We are all attempting to prove our point of view from the same Scripture and must ask for the leading of the Holy Spirit.

I taste a lot of self-righteousness and a lack of tolerance and love. Some Christians can be so hard and merciless in their judgment.

Seek what unites us so that the name of the Lord be praised and the gospel be heard in the whole world. Only then are we obedient to the Lord's commandment.

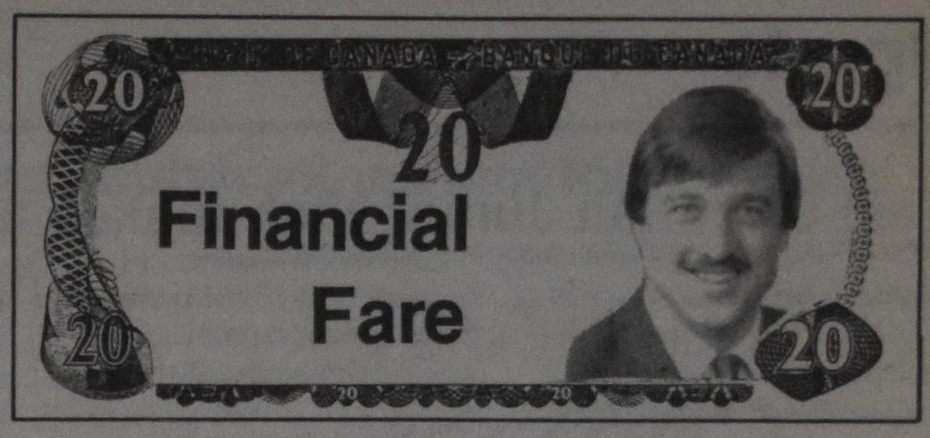
J.N. Braacx
Burnaby, B.C.

New hymnal corrects faulty tradition

I was happy to see Andrew Kuyvenhoven address a liturgical issue in his new column (May 3, 1991), and to alert us to a faulty tradition about Christ's body being *broken* for us. However, this heterodoxy can perhaps be corrected fairly easily by purchasing the 1987 *Psalter Hymnal*.

In all the liturgical forms for the Lord's Supper the offending phrase now reads: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ was *given*... (pp. 975, 981, 986). If one uses this correct formulation, there is no reason for the pastor to refrain from raising the bread high and breaking it so that all can see. (Of course, the bread need not be a "long, crust-free bar," but can be a whole loaf of home-made bread.)

Harry Boonstra
Grand Rapids, Mich.



Investing with a conscience

The issue of how ethics relate to business practice is not a new one. When it comes to investing into shares of corporations, many people make judgments based on ethical considerations. A number of key areas become the subject of scrutiny in analysing different corporations. Involvement in liquor, tobacco, gambling, military activities may cause ethical concerns, depending on the individual. Labour practices and involvement with repressive regimes may also cause concern. Currently, the environmental impact of a corporation's activities is becoming a major criterion for many investors. As a result, businesses involved in nuclear power or coal-based power have come under closer examination by investors.

In response to these concerns a number of mutual fund companies have set up "ethical funds." Two examples include the "Summa Fund" offered by Investors Group and the "Ethical Growth Fund" offered by VanCity Credit Union. VanCity's Ethical Growth Fund has been called Canada's first socially responsible mutual fund. The fund began operation in 1986. "The fund will invest only in stocks and bonds issued by companies that meet the commonly held ethical standards of Canadians," according to VanCity chairperson David Levi. Another example is the "Dynamic Green Fund" that invests only in environmentally friendly companies.

Where to draw the line?

What is ethical, unethical, environmentally friendly or unfriendly is to some extent subjective. In many cases it becomes a question of degree. For example, if a corporation derives only five per cent of its profits from military contracts should this eliminate them based on ethical considerations? What about the suppliers to this corporation? Does the steel manufacturer who supplies the steel used in a cruise missile become a non-candidate for investment based on ethical considerations? Is a farmer who grows tobacco unethical?

What about corporations that operate in repressive regimes? For example, if *any* corporation operates in South Africa, is it unethical to invest in it? What if that corporation supplies South African hospitals with medical equipment? Obviously, at a certain point almost every corporation can be eliminated on ethical grounds for some tenuous connection to another business that may be considered "unethical."

You can carry this sort of thinking to logical but impractical conclusions. Should you deposit money in a bank that lends to corporations that carry on business in areas that you deem to be unethical? These are the kinds of decisions that conscientious investors have to consider. John Templeton, whom *Forbes* magazine calls the "dean of investment fund managers" has managed the Templeton Growth Fund for close to 40 years.

Half is okay?

Templeton's guidelines are much broader than the newer ethical funds because of the dilemma he sees in determining what is ethical or unethical. Templeton will not invest in corporations that derive more than 50 per cent of their earnings from alcohol, tobacco and gambling revenues.

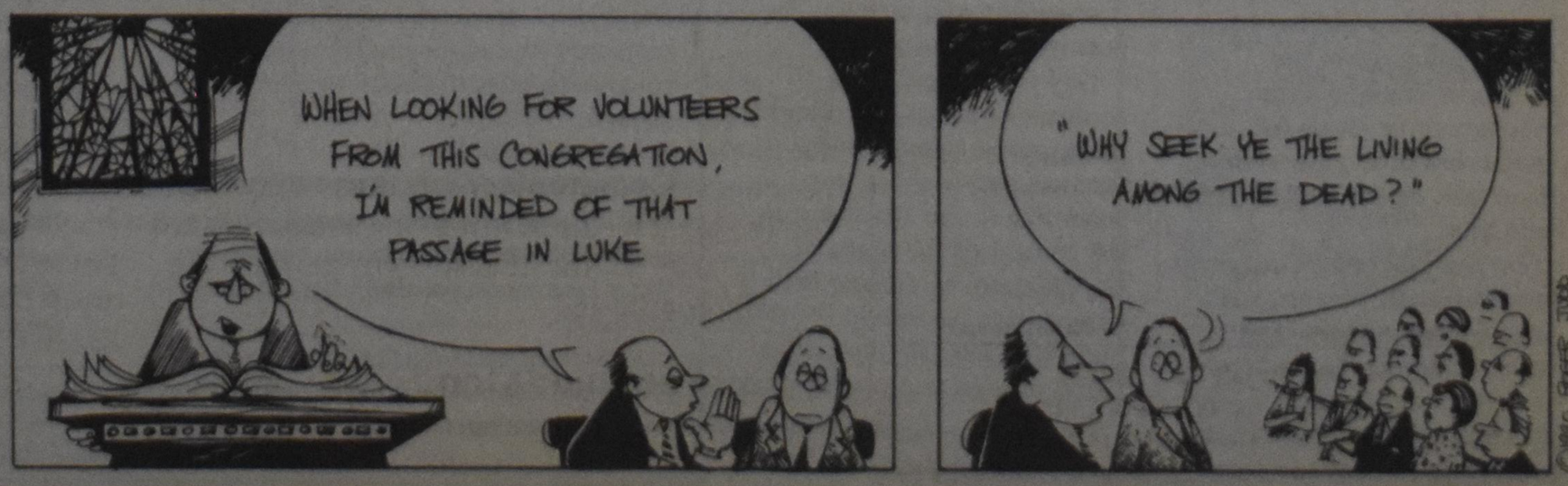
Obviously, investments are made for profits. If ethical considerations govern investment decisions, will profitability suffer? One school of thought suggests that any restrictive criteria will potentially affect investment performance.

Not necessarily, according to VanCity's David Levi. Selection using ethical standards may actually increase returns. "Our research measured performance of the TSE [Toronto Stock Exchange] companies over a 10-year period. Then we compared that performance with the return we would get if we eliminated the companies that didn't fit our [ethical] criteria. We discovered that using our standards increased returns by one per cent. Apparently, unethical companies are a drag on the TSE. Many experts agree that there's no cost to returns using socially responsible screens, particularly in an environment where irresponsible corporations are being fined and/or sued for wrong-doing.

Investment decisions can be difficult. Safety, rates of return, the impact of taxes and liquidity are still important criteria. Ethical concerns are now becoming a major factor in many investors' minds. It is encouraging to see a number of investment vehicles being made available for these investors.

Leonard Bick is a financial planner in Ancaster, Ont.

BEYOND BELIEF


WHEN LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS FROM THIS CONGREGATION, I'M REMINDED OF THAT PASSAGE IN LUKE
"WHY SEEK YE THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD?"
©1991 ROGER JUDD

Sports

East Christian Junior High makes a run for it

Louisa F. Bruinsma

EDMONTON: The junior high students at East Edmonton Christian School don't allow the relatively small size of their student body to prevent them from playing along with the big-time teams.

Participation in the "Journal" games held in March resulted in second-place standing for their relay team. Not bad for a junior-high student body numbering only 66.

In April the Grade 9 team tied (with Caledonia Park Junior High) for first place in the city-wide Klondike relay games, an event that includes shot put, long jump and various types of relays.

"We have only eight girls in our class," says Ann Bruinsma, "and there were only six of us who participated in all the events."

"Surprised!" admits Valerie Goutbeck when asked about her reaction to the results. "I didn't think we did that good. It was exciting to watch my friends participate in the events and I enjoyed the shot put and long jump activities."

"The Klondike relays gave us an opportunity to work together, since all events are scored according to how well the team does collectively," explains the coach affectionately known as "Miss K." "Community and co-operation are constant goals at East."

"It's great to see the classes grow more unified, especially the Grade 9 students since they are in their last year together," she adds. "It was encouraging to see so many parents there both coaching and cheering us on."

"You should have heard the cheering," says Grace Craig, assistant track coach. "They were all clamouring around the announcer so much I had to push the kids away from him."

Parent Ags VandenBoogaard never misses watching her children run. "It's a delight to see so many of our students continuing to participate in the games" she says. "Practice, team work and challenging physical activity contribute to the overall picture of education."

Competition is de-emphasized at East, so there is a place for everyone in sports, not just those who place at the top. Shortly after Leah Boonstra, Grade 5, was born, doctors predicted that she would never walk. She does walk — and she runs, though not as well as others. Nevertheless, coach Alan Drexhage encouraged her to run in the Journal games. It was a moving moment when she finished.

"She got such a cheer," says her mother, Edith.

Though she did not place at all, she was a winner. At East Edmonton Christian School winning matters, but it's not everything.

Photo: Louisa F. Bruinsma

At East Edmonton Christian School you do not have to place first to be a winner.

Competition and sports

Ralph Huizinga

When Dan Van Keeken, moderator of an Edmonton East Jr. High "Home and School" evening, tried to enlist Dr. Randy Gregg's assistance in order to grasp his star-studded biography, his suggestion was as unpretentious as the man himself: "Just tell them I...have four children."

In his address on school and community sports, Gregg drew very little from his experience as an Edmonton Oiler. Professional sports was a job and a business, he said, and not an appropriate model for organizing and directing sports programs for kids in schools and communities.

'Must win' attitude causes stress

He began by talking about the enormous social stress felt by kids today and how that stress has pervaded the experience of many kids who participate in organized sports, where the drive to win has made a truism of that famous line, "Winning isn't everything: it's the only thing."

Gregg emphasized that being *your* best was more important than being *the* best and that participation was more important than success. Everyone should have access to sports; the ones who need sports the most are those aren't good at it.

Gregg also seized the opportunity to make a pitch for the Fun Team concept he helped develop and has been campaigning for in the province. The Fun Team espouses three ideals for sports: low costs, low competition, and parent participation with kids.

On this last point Gregg was most insistent: parents, not professional athletes, are the best role models for children and their participation provides the fundamentals of positive support and encouragement. The modelling is essential.

Gregg endorsed the Bill of Rights for Athletes adopted by the United Nations in 1979, the U.N.'s Year of the Child. Among these rights are the right to participate and to play at a level commensurate with one's ability, the right to qualified leadership, the right to safe and healthy play, the right to share in decision making, and the right to play as a child and have fun.

Dr. Robert Day, newly appointed head of the physical education department at The King's College, had the unenviable task of speaking after Dr. Gregg. Day's address dealt with the role of sports and competition in the Christian community and in education. He regretted that in our drive to develop winning teams and individuals, we all too often ignore the fact that the well-being of the whole person should be our primary concern. And while he acknowledged a number of problems related to competition, he felt strongly that this was no reason to avoid or abandon sports entirely.

In fact, according to Day, Christians should feel a special responsibility to develop and promote a Christian approach to competition. Rather than avoid it as problematic we should view sports as an educational opportunity, and competition as a medium for positive instruction.

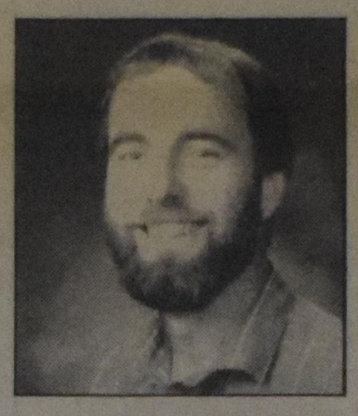
Day encouraged us to continue to assess our roles as participants, parents and teachers and to do so not according to our needs but in the context of the needs of our children. In dealing with competition we should understand its two distinctive parts: process and product.

Too great an emphasis on the product or the results encourages the view of competition as an athletic dual and discourages concern for the well-being of the participants. Greater emphasis on the process is more conducive to the development of the whole person and to the development of Christian attitudes.

Both Day and Gregg challenged some very popular attitudes towards sports and competition and challenged us to adopt a perspective in which the nurturing of our children is the primary focus. Just winning, it would appear, isn't very much at all.

Ralph Huizinga is a member of the East Home and School executive and serves on the school's public relations committee. This article was reprinted from the Jan. '91 East Envoy and is used with permission of the author.

REFLEXION



REFLEXION

Television sports: do you really watch the game?

John Byl

A recent study indicated that adults watch approximately 25 hours of television a week. Perhaps some of you spent nearly that many hours watching the hockey play-offs, much to the chagrin of your spouse. Even if you had not planned to watch hockey and were going to watch the 10 o'clock news...forget it; you were watching hockey. (I thought it was neat, however, how one married man I know spent an evening with his dad watching the hockey game together.) But the question is: do we really *watch* the game?

In a recent study two portions of a hockey game were analyzed. One segment had 11 rough incidents and the other only three. However, the commentators led one to believe that the least rough segment was actually rougher. These segments were shown to 139 people. Those people who watched the rough play without the sound rated it as rougher than those who watched this same segment with the commentator. Those who watched the not-so-rough segment without sound rated it as least rough, while those who watched this same segment with commentary that stressed roughness, rated this as the roughest of all groups.

Commentary influences perception

In other words, on the strength of the sports-casters' play-by-play account, the viewers "saw" fierce competition where it really did not exist.

Viewers in the arena perceive an event as is. Home TV viewers are exposed to a media event that is the product of a team of professional gatekeepers and embellishers. In choosing from among the several close-ups, long shots, replays, cutaways and various segments of action at his or her disposal, the director is certainly an editor of the game, while the sports-casters are in charge of embellishing the drama of the affair, thereby making it more palatable to the action-hungry audience.

This is rather like a cartoon I once saw in which the announcers said the referee made "an incredible decision...it should have been given the other way, still the ref is much nearer than I am...so it must have been tails." Perhaps this comical look at the play-by-play analysis of the coin-toss is not so far off the mark and portrays accurately the type of broadcasting we expect in North America.

Spectating need not be inactive

Try, sometime, watching a sport contest on television with the sound turned off. If it's hockey, try being the coach and predict who you would use as the goalie, how you would change the lines, whether you would want to change the tempo, what play you would have called. Between periods talk about it with your fellow viewers: What went wrong? What went right? What do we do when we resume play?

Don't be a couch potato. Take an active role. The major difficulty with the active approach is that you will need to get to know the game rather than rely on another's interpretation of it. Remember, broadcasters do not describe a contest; they interpret it.

John Byl teaches physical education at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

Cinema summaries

Marian Van Til

Oscar

Rated PG
Stars Sylvester Stallone, Marisa Tomei, Ornella Muti, Peter Riegert, Harry Shearer, Martin Ferrero, Tim Curry, Kirk Douglas
Directed by John Landis

Based on the macho, violent Rocky and Rambo hype and the media's vigilant reporting on Sylvester Stallone's personal life, it hasn't taken much effort on my part to detest the man — or at least his public image. So it hasn't taken a lot of perseverance, either, to stay away from movies in which he stars.

But wait! Recently I read this: "Every now and then actors should get a psychic chisel out and remold themselves into the image they want to have. I'd like to change my direction a little bit now and rediscover myself." Sylvester Stallone said that. And he's not only said, he's done it, and a rediscovery it is.

The result is *Oscar,* an old-fashioned farce in which Stallone actually speaks complete sentences, even paragraphs! (He jokingly admits he talks more in this film than in all his other movies combined.) Then too, there's not one scene in which he bares his pectoral muscles or shoots a gun; he doesn't swear, he's vulnerable, he's helpless to control his own life (events and others do that for him), and — he's *funny*.

Fast and furious

When Oscar's opening credits roll accompanied by an on-stage puppet singing an energetic aria from Mozart's comic opera *The Marriage of Figaro,* a classical farce, one assumes the opening scene will be in an opera house (a switch from Rambo, indeed). That's not the case, but the music and allusion to the plot of *The Marriage of Figaro* set the stage for *Oscar's* twisting plot and lighthearted mood.

Stallone's character, Angelo "Snaps" Provolone, is a 1930s gangster. His father, on his deathbed (in an unusual and amusing cameo appearance by Kirk Douglas), makes Snaps vow he'll go straight. Snaps sets about to obey. He gets rid of the nickname and insists his goons quit calling him "Boss"; he takes elocution lessons to get rid of his flat accent and low-life aura; he has a suit made so he'll look like a banker — he is about to meet with some bankers who will make him a bank director because they need his money and are willing to overlook his "background"; his henchmen and hitmen become butlers and servants (and in one droll scene are "disarmed" of their various guns, brass knuckles, etc.).

But on the morning he decides to go straight, Snaps' daughter decides her father has been over-protective long enough. She announces she's in love and is going to run away with her boyfriend. Not a half-hour earlier Snaps' accountant had shown up asking for a raise so he could ask his girlfriend — who turns out to be Snaps' daughter...but who really isn't Snaps' daughter...but who in the end really is — to marry him. (Whoever she is, she's used to an expensive lifestyle.)

Walking the straight and narrow

Then proceeds a series of morning visitors, mistaken identities and swapped bags, all of which results in general mayhem and which after a long day convince Snaps that the world on the right side of the law is more crooked than the crooks on the wrong side.

While there's a lot of broad, slapstick buffoonery in *Oscar,* there's also some rather subtle wit which Stallone and many of the lesser characters (Peter Riegert, especially, who plays the "butler") carry off very well. It's especially amusing that the title character is nowhere to be found. Stallone does an adept send-up of the kind of swaggering characters with which he's been associated almost exclusively till now; he proves he has the ability to laugh at himself, which more than anything else is what has made me see him in a new light.

What this film also proves is that Stallone *can* act; he's no Laurence Olivier, and *Oscar* isn't *Hamlet,* but he's not without talent and comedic timing. And the film is not without charm. While there are several references to having sex and children out of wedlock, this is essentially a family movie — and a huge step in the right direction for Sylvester Stallone.

KIDS FOLLOW THE WATER SAFETY RULES

KNOW YOUR LIMITS.

DO YOU?

The Canadian Red Cross Society

Christian Reformed publications win top honours

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (CRCP) — *The Banner* and *Reformed Worship* received top awards for general excellence from the Associated Church Press (ACP) at the annual ACP Award of Merit Program held April 29 in St. Louis, MO. Both periodicals are published by CRC Publications, a publishing ministry of the Christian Reformed Church.

The Banner received the ACP's award of merit (first place) in general excellence as 1990's Denominational Magazine of the Year. For 125 years *The Banner* has stood as the flagship publication of the CRC denomination; never before in its history has it singly claimed this prestigious award. *The Banner* was chosen from among 16 other denominational magazines.

This year's ACP judges — all professors of the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism — gave *The Banner* high ratings for content, writing, design, and photography. "The variety of content is marvelous. It's people-oriented with a good balance of events and ideas, as well as superb editorials," commented the judges. "The typography, format, and design is excellent!...The magazine has a nice feel; a real joy to read."

Judges gave *The Banner* three other awards: (1) first place for the editorial, "Divorce and Secession," written by Rev. Galen Meyer, editor in chief; (2) first place for Rich Bishop's cartoon illustration of bar-coded babies in a large church nursery; and (3) honourable mention for most improved publication.

Reformed Worship, a quarterly resource journal of music and liturgy, took home the award of merit for non-denominational magazines with circulation of less than 10,000. Dr. Emily Brink, editor, said this is the second year *Reformed Worship* has been recognized in the general excellence category (last year it received honourable mention). The magazine has been in print for less than five years and has a targeted subscriber list of 3,500 pastors, worship planners and leaders, and musicians in denominations of the Reformed/Presbyterian tradition.

Judges selected *Reformed Worship* as top contender among 21 other such magazines. They commented on it's "good, matter-of-fact, useful information"; lively articles "that capture the reader's attention"; and design that is "unified, consistent, and has a strong personality." In all, they classify *Reformed Worship* as an "extremely useful publication; excellent service journalism."

Literacy projects announced for Ontario

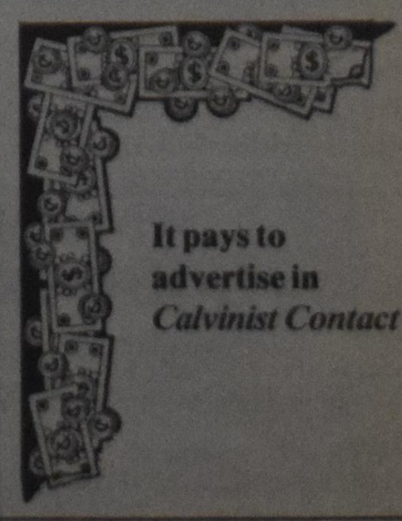
OTTAWA (MCC) — Federal Multiculturalism and Citizenship Minister Gerry Weiner recently announced funding of $528,303 for a series of workplace literacy projects in the province of Ontario.

The projects will support a wide range of workplace literacy activities, including programs to upgrade the skills of literacy instructors, development of curriculum materials and effective models to deliver training in diverse workplaces.

"Strong workplace literacy skills are necessary for Canadian workers to adapt to and succeed in an increasingly more technological workplace. These grants will help Ontario workers participate more productively and with greater personal opportunity in the workplace of tomorrow, as well as that of today," said Mr. Weiner.

Through a special Workplace Incentive Grants Program, co-sponsored with the province of Ontario, eleven grants will be provided to help a variety of organizations develop expertise in providing effective literacy and basic skills training in the workplace. These will be done through activities such as training literacy instructors, producing curriculum materials, and exploring new ways of delivering programs. The province of Ontario will sponsor additional pilot projects.

The federal funding comes from the National Literacy Secretariat of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada.



It pays to advertise in *Calvinist Contact*

Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

Palestinian Christian priest meets with Canadian church leaders

TORONTO (WVC) — Lasting peace will not come to the Middle East until we make a new commitment to seek justice for all the people of the region. The time has come for Western churches to re-evaluate their positions on the conflict between Jews and Palestinians in Israel. Reconciliation will only occur when oppression is replaced with freedom and security for all, whether Jew or Palestinian. This challenge was expressed by Father Elias Chacour, a Palestinian Christian and author of *Blood Brothers* and *We Belong to the Land.*

Elias Chacour is ordained in the Melkite Order, an ancient body of Christian believers that has existed in the Middle East since the earliest centuries of Christianity. He has been a priest for 26 years. Following seminary studies in Paris, he was the first Palestinian to earn a degree from the Hebrew University where he studied Bible and Talmud. He is involved in building schools and community centres in Israel's Galilee region.

Father Chacour met with Christian leaders in Toronto on May 6. World Vision Canada, an international Christian humanitarian relief and development agency, arranged and facilitated the meeting and supports Father Chacour's work in Galilee.

"What is essentially a political issue over recognition of territory is often clouded by religious arguments. Biblical injunctions or religious statements must not be used to strengthen political claims which perpetuate injustice. I affirm the right of Israel to exist, but this right cannot come at the expense of another people who share the land," he says.

"There are universal Christian principles, and we must be a witness to God's presence in the region. I cannot compromise my commitment to justice. Israel exists and will continue to exist, but I refuse to be relegated to second-class status in my own homeland."

Father Chacour challenged Western Christians to move beyond denominational arguments here in Canada and set new standards for compassion and justice in Israel and the world.

Justice has a cost

"Justice comes at a cost. Peacemaking takes work," he says.

The result is worth the sacrifice, he explains. Any solution must include the return of Israel's occupied territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Palestinians.

The recent Persian Gulf War has undermined efforts at reconciliation between Jews and Palestinians in Israel. Despite the intense international attention focused on the Middle east in recent months, the restrictions on the activities of Palestinians in the territories occupied by Israel have increased, he says.

During the war, a 24-hour curfew was imposed on Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, meaning that for 29 days people were not allowed to leave their homes or shelters in refugee camps. Adults were not permitted to go to work, children had to remain inside, pregnant women were forced to give birth where they were, and families could not even remove the bodies of dead family members from their homes. In addition, despite the continual threat of attack by Iraqi chemical weapons, protective gas masks were not issued to these families.

This kind of persecution has continued for years, and despite a deeply-divided Israeli government, Father Chacour does not expect positive change soon.

The recent peace initiatives by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker have only a slim hope of making progress, Father Chacour says.

"Mr. Baker is very sincere, but it is not enough. His counterpart in the Israeli government must be equally sincere. I am not very optimistic."

"I will try to keep my eyes open for a surprise, however," he adds.

Catholic bishops focus on youth ministry

OTTAWA (CCCB) — Canada's Catholic bishops have written a bold statement on youth ministry. It's called *We Are Strong Together: A Vision for Youth Ministry* and was formally released on Sunday, April 28, the World Day of Youth.

Bishop Faber MacDonald of Grand Falls, Newfoundland, chairs the bishops' Commission for Christian Education, the group which approved production of the paper. He says the message is simple. "A community that discerns the Spirit realizes that young people share with adults in the ministry of the church."

The vision outlined in the paper is that young people are "partners in ministry" with others in the church. They minister to one another, with skill, energy and insight that are also important resources in general parish and church life.

This vision has already been taken off the page and put into practice. More than 200 people who work in youth ministry across Canada met in Hull, Quebec, on the weekend of April 11-14.

Young and old minister to each other and the world

The conference "came alive" by using the bishops' vision paper as a cornerstone, according to Pat Verrier, a parish worker at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Winnipeg. "There was a lot of hope there and a lot of faith among the young and those who work with the young," Verrier said.

The vision paper acknowledges that young people are often alienated by a model of the local church in which they "are regarded primarily as recipients of the ministry of adults."

Too often, it says, "communities still seem to lack a vision of youth ministry that can enable young people to become full partners."

A better model, the bishops say, is one of "reciprocal ministry" in which adults can minister to young people, but the young may also minister to adults. Both groups are called to minister to the world.

While it calls upon parishes and individuals to pursue a more vibrant youth ministry, the paper avoids attempting to prescribe a course of action. The bishops acknowledge that local conditions vary too greatly for any one plan to work in all cases.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' (CCCB) National Office of Religious Education is acting as a resource group to propel the vision of youth ministry. The National Office of Religious Education has sent a package of material to all English-speaking parishes in Canada. The package includes the vision paper, homily notes, prayers of the faithful and questions for group reflection. An audio cassette with three versions of the song "We Are Strong Together" is also available for minimal charge.

Mormon leader admits stories were lies

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (EP) — Mormon leader Elder Paul H. Dunn has inspired audiences for over 25 years with amazing stories from his own life.

Dunn held listeners spellbound with the story of his best friend dying in his arms during World War II, while imploring him to teach America's youth about patriotism. He told of God miraculously protecting him while enemy machine-gun bullets ripped away his clothing, helmet and gear without touching his skin. And he spoke of the role his Mormon values played in preparing him for his career in major league baseball with the St. Louis Cardinals.

The stories are inspiring. The stories are fascinating. But according to the *Arizona Republic*, the stories aren't true.

Dunn never played for the Cardinals, or any other major league team, says the paper, though he did spend a season on a Cardinals' farm team. Only the heel of his boot took a bullet during the war. And his "dead" best friend is alive and well, and living in Odessa, Missouri. "Maybe he got me mixed up with another person," said Dunn's war buddy, Harold Lester Brown, who says he still occasionally exchanges Christmas cards with the now-retired Mormon leader.

Dunn admitted to the *Arizona Republic* that some of the stories he's told about himself are untrue, but defended his "embellishments" as necessary to illustrate his theological and moral points. Dunn compares his exaggerations to the parables of Christ.

Dunn, 66, who has a doctorate in education, said he doesn't consider it deceitful to alter facts or exaggerate. He says he works to "combine" elements of several true stories into a single story that will convey his message and capture audience interest.

"The combining of stories seems justifiable in terms of illustrating a point," Dunn told the *Arizona Republic*. "My motives are pure and innocent. I haven't purposely tried to embellish or rewrite history. I've tried to illustrate points that would create interest."

Arctic outreach brings thousands to Christ

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (EP) — Over 50 Christian young people from the U.S. and Canada used their athletic and performing arts skills as a platform for sharing the gospel during a recently-concluded 15-day mission trip to the arctic regions of northern Scandinavia and the Soviet union. The trip was sponsored by the U.S.-based Christian Outreach International (COI).

The far north of Sweden, Finland, and the U.S.S.R., as well as several cities along and above the arctic circle, were the destinations of the short-term mission team. At hockey games, in concert halls, and on city streets, thousands of people heard the gospel message, according to COI.

Over 50,000 tracts and 2,500 New Testaments were given out in the Soviet Union. In the large port city of Murmansk, with a population of 500,000, and neighbouring Olenegorsk, response to the COI team was very strong, the organization reported. Local hockey clubs were given donated equipment by the team, and new friendships were formed. Russian Christians worked together with the North Americans in witnessing.

In Sweden, the COI team visited public schools and had opportunities to share their personal testimonies and present the gospel to students. A full-time COI missionary will continue the school evangelism outreach program, and will play on a Swedish hockey club in Ornskoldsvik. In Finland, a hockey game in Roveniemi gave the opportunity to present Christ both individually and to a crowd of spectators.

According to COI, thousands responded to the gospel message during the trip. Many others received tracts and Scripture portions, and will have opportunities to write to COI for additional services, including local follow-up and a Bible correspondence course in the respondent's language.

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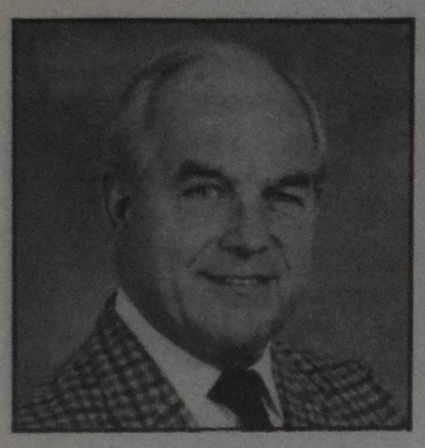

Canadian Church Scene

Jacob Kuntz

Christianity and the media

In one of its April issues *Christian Week* commented on the declines churches in this country have experienced during the last years; especially declines in attendance and in the level of confidence in religious leaders. Why is this happening? Some possible answers: relativism (every idea must be tolerated); lack of leadership in Canadian evangelical churches. But the media is also to blame for the above-mentioned decline:

"The media carry a large responsibility for how Christianity is viewed. They have an inordinate advantage in shaping the Canadian mind. There is scarcely a major paper in the country which is willing to publicly support a Christian worldview. There may be individual journalists, but even they are few and barely able to hold their own. Most major dailies take the attitude that to have a professed Christian writing a religion section is to support a bias, even though they wouldn't think of putting people on the sportsbeat who know nothing about it or someone on business who has no notion about it. With few exceptions, the religion writing in this country is the terrain of people who treat it as little more than a silly superstition.

"Not only that, Christians are entirely at the mercy of secular stations when they want to get on to radio and television. The rules do not allow Christian-owned stations. It is much harder to get a Christian voice on to radio than it is to get even the most degraded rock music sound. The CBC has programs which pump a steady diet denigrating Christianity or Judeo-Christian values, but has virtually no time for programming which allows an explicit defence of the Christian faith. Much of the Christian broadcasting in this country is increasingly being relegated to the marginal or small-town stations. It is hard to hear a Christian voice clearly and articulately presented in major centres."

Differences of opinion in the church.

There is, today, no church in which there are no differences of opinion among members. One can no longer expect that everyone will have the same view with respect to the many issues that confront us these days. Those who insist on that are asking for the impossible. But that does not put the Gospel of Christ in jeopardy. The *War Cry* of March 23 wrote about the "fifth column" and had this to say:

"There is honest difference of opinion between Christians on matters such as the interpretation of Scripture, different methods of worship, the nature of church government and the best forms of ministry. Such difference of opinion is one of the signs of a healthy church. Lively theological debate sharpens the wits, feeds the soul and contributes to understanding and growth. God does not require believers to become dull-witted clones; rather he rejoices when they express their individuality through faith in him and fidelity to the truth as it is revealed in Jesus Christ.

"However, there is a clear distinction between orthodoxy and apostasy, between loyalty to Christ and disloyalty. When choice is required a person cannot play with the meaning of language so that acceptable words or phrases are emptied of their original Christian meaning and stretched to accommodate alien concepts. This happened some time ago with much publicized comments by the Bishop of Durham, in England, who said he did not accept the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, the authenticity of much of the Bible, the reality of heaven or hell or whether Jesus was born of a virgin, and much more. A prominent newspaper wondered why the bishop, if he did not believe the faith he was required to uphold, did not do the honourable thing and resign."

Energy and efficiency

Canada faces increasing demands for energy in the near future. Is nuclear power, with all its risks, the only solution? Does Canada really need new sources of electrical power? The Anglican Church is asked to commit itself to the "Campaign for Nuclear Phaseout" and to help develop "a sustainable energy policy that stresses energy efficiency, conservation and alternative energy sources. We find the following comments in the *Anglican Journal* of May 1991:

"But when all factors, particularly environmental factors, are considered, nuclear generation remains the best way to produce new sources of electrical power. Except that Canada does not need new sources of electrical power.

"Canadians are the 'energy pigs' of the world, using more energy per capita than any other industrialized country.

"If Canada were as energy efficient as, for example, Germany or Denmark, Ontario could shut down every one of its 20 nuclear generating stations.

"If efficiency reached the levels of France or Japan, it could shut down most of its coal plants too.

"Dollar for dollar, nothing can compete with energy created through efficiency.

"Energy efficiency does not, as some people fear, mean a reduced standard of living.

"It means better insulation and weather sealing. It means more energy efficient products, such as fluorescent light bulbs and efficient refrigerators, both of which are available today.

"It means more efficient electric motors in industries, one of the most wasteful users of energy in Canada.

"It means small hydroelectric plants, private sector generation of electricity, and co-generation, the process of using heat from an industrial process to generate electricity.

"All of this is possible with today's technology. And money saved by using less energy can be better spent developing technology which will allow us to use even less in the future.

"Canada can become an efficient user of energy and the earth's resources; all that is needed is a commitment from Canadians.

"Christians, as stewards of God's creation, have responsibility to lead the way."

Canada's woes

Canadian church magazines are also concerned about the problems our nation is having today. We have not found any church paper that would favour the breakup of the country; on the contrary, again and again there are pleas to stay together as one nation and to work out our differences. The *Free Methodist Herald* of April 1991 wrote the following under the title "Is Canada a 'bad marriage'":

"French and English Canadians, from almost every sector of our society, are expressing grave misgivings about the possibility of continuing together. And within English Canada there is talk of Balkanizing the country into western, central and eastern regions. It is instructive to note how often the language and logic of divorce is being used, and the concessions many are making that we are witnessing the dissolution of a 'bad marriage.' The language and logic of divorce, however, demands a reply.

"One of the most important features of marriages and families is that under their obligations we are sometimes constrained to live with people we wouldn't otherwise bear. And yet living with those differences — sometimes real, sometimes perceived — has a profound effect on our personality. Under the constraints of marriage, character is molded and shaped. Out of it a strong character can develop that is able to discern and project essential differences, that can concede and tolerate non-essentials and that can contribute to a union far greater than what is possible alone.

"The language and logic of divorce, as applied to the future of our country, argues against this constraint of living with people different from ourselves. It argues against the benefits of the whole in favour of the interests of the individual. It argues against the essential quality which we have enshrined in our constitution and which we share before God.

"However difficult the time may be in the history of our nation, there is clearly an entry point for Christian people to speak against the language and logic of divorce. To speak, as John Wesley surely would have, against divisions of convenience that become hotbeds of bitterness and malice. The 1970s and 1980s taught us a hard, clear lesson: there's no such thing as an easy divorce."

The *Catholic Register* (April 20) is worried about the possible influence of the Bloc Quebecois, the party of Lucien Bouchard.

"If an orator bellowed today from the balcony of Montreal City Hall, 'Vive le Quebec libre!' he would not likely be censored, for he would simply be expressing the fervent wishes of most Quebecers.

"Paradoxically, federal leaders are burning the midnight oil to come up with major compromises in government structure to forestall a Quebec walkout. The effort seems to be counter-productive in the rest of the country, and too little too late in Quebec. If the Meech Lake Accord taught us anything, it taught us that.

"In the federal election that must be held by 1993, it is not inconceivable that the federal separatist party, the Bloc Quebecois, will win 60 of the area's 75 seats. Its leader, Lucien Bouchard, this month formalized electoral support from the Parti Quebecois.

"If he wins anything like 60 seats in a five-party House of Commons, he is positioning himself to pull off an amazing feat: being the balance of power in the next government of Canada. But that is the very government that will negotiate the terms of the divorce demanded by the new government of Quebec.

"Who will speak for Canada? One hears that question more and more across the land.

"It is bad enough to contemplate the departure of the great province of Quebec from Canada, but it is mindboggling to think that the separatists, before departing Ottawa, could succeed in destabilizing governance of the Canada that remained."

Jacob Kuntz is pastor of First Christian Reformed Church, Kitchener, Ont.

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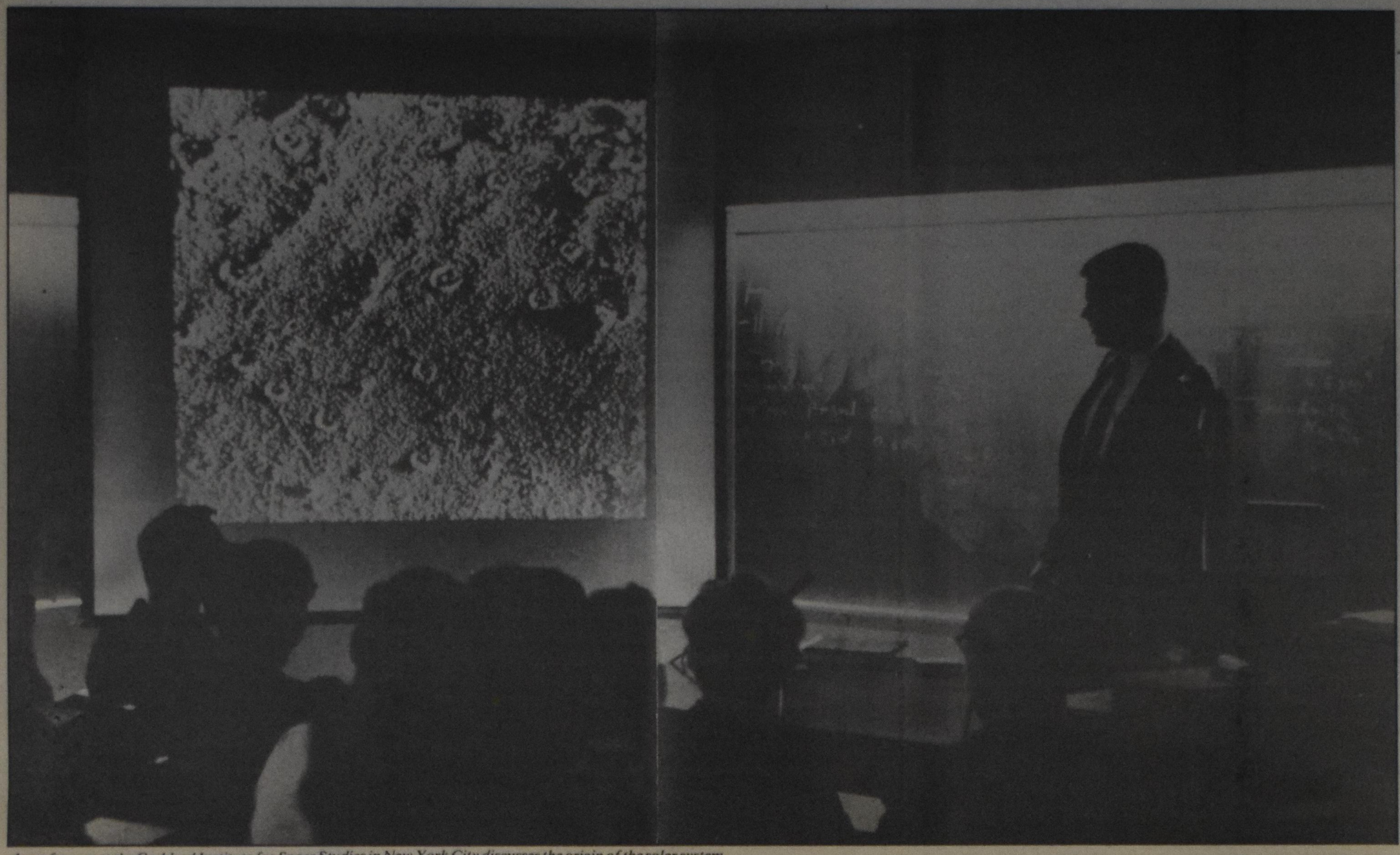
Features

How do we sort through the creation-evolution issue?



A conference at the Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City discusses the origin of the solar system.

Photo: Red Giants and White Dwarfs

Robert VanderVennen

The pot is boiling and the heat is still being turned up. As the 1991 synod of the Christian Reformed Church meets in Iowa in June to deal with a wide range of business, one item that stands out in the minds of many people is the long-awaited report on "Creation and Science."

The report, a substantial study, offers a summary of conclusions, declarations, pastoral advice and recommendations for action. Some of the report's conclusions are quoted in this issue of *Calvinist Contact*.

How are we to understand this issue? Who are we to cheer for, and who to hiss?

At issue is how the church should view science and how it should relate to its natural scientists. Is science part of the revelation of God, part of what we call "general revelation"? Starting at the edge of the field of vision was the perennial problem of evolution, which is being moved closer to centre stage by critics of the report. A sensitive concern is whether the Bible permits us to think that Adam may have been created from a pre-existing living being.

In this issue of C.C. theologian Gordon Spykman, a member of the synod's study committee, shows statements written by astronomer Howard Van Till which lie behind the Report's "Summary of Conclusions." Geologist Gordon Winder writes to his mother and to us to show how the Niagara River gorge supports the idea of a long age for the earth.

Small science and large science

Spykman says that Van Till is dualistic in his thinking, that he too much isolates science and faith. There may be some truth to that. But I think there is greater complexity here than is generally talked about. Scientific research is abstract, that is, it focuses its study on a very narrow part of all reality, excluding for the moment everything else. Natural scientists study matter and energy. They identify things and see how they function. Maybe we can call this "small science."

But what happens to this "small science" when you go home from the lab and when you go to church? Then you want to understand it in the context of a larger view of the world and the work of God. Then you may think in a wide context about why things happened as they did. This, too, may be scientific thinking, but it is a different kind than you do in the lab. We could call this "large science."

Van Till does both kinds of science. When he does small science with his professional colleagues, he is not explicitly thinking about the ways of God. It may be that this is where Spykman smells dualism. They should talk about this together.

Others are criticizing the report as placing general revelation (what God has done and is doing in the world) on equal footing with special revelation (what God tells us through the writers of the Bible). A person acts and also speaks. Are actions and words equally valid and trustworthy? I think so. With us humans actions and words are sometimes contradictory, but not with God. We are very verbal and rational people — words count most heavily with us. It is easier for us to give more weight to revelation through words than through deeds.

It strikes me strange that the Belgic Confession of Faith is used as a judge of how science is to be seen in relation to God's revelation. What sense does it make to judge science by human writings written before science existed? You can judge science by the earlier writings in the Bible, but the Bible is on a different level than human writings.

Communication by words and deeds

We may also have a problem of language as we speak about God's communication. God wordlessly shows us some things in his created world and in the history of the human race, which we need to understand. That involves science, from which we draw conclusions about God's regular activities. God also reveals himself in words in Scripture, which we need to understand, too.

What do we mean when we use the word "revelation"? Is revelation what God is saying, or what we are understanding? In fact we speak of "revelation" in both senses, and interchangeably, which causes confusion. Maybe we should consistently use "revelation" when we talk about the signals God sends out, and use other words for our understanding them.

A result of that wrong use of words shows up in our thinking that we can judge science by the Bible. Actually we can only judge science by our own *understanding* of the Bible, often expressed in our theology.

Creation of Adam from "dust"

A specific point of contention is whether we may consider whether Adam may have been created from a creature already living. Because this has the smell of "evolution," that possiblity is being strongly opposed by some. They want the church to say that the Bible rules out all theories that say that Adam was created from a living being.

This move is misguided, I think. There is a long history of the church making statements of the type, "It is impossible that..." when later findings make the statement absurd. Even today there are a great many things that seem to us to be unthinkable, and most of them will never happen.

This statement about pre-Adamites doesn't need to be made any more than a host of others do. People who agree with the minority statement will do best to take the approach of Al Wolters, member of the study committee who agrees with the statement but says the church should not say it.

A deeper point lies under the pre-Adamite question. That is that evolution is seen as a secular, atheistic theory that Christians should have no part of. There are reasons, of course, why Christians have often wrongly thought of evolution as anti-Christian. Among the reasons are that scientific process has generally been considered separate from the acts of God.

We'd much rather think that God does things suddenly, with a splash. Eye-popping miracles are God's way, we think. Not usually so. Most of the things God does he does by way of procedures and laws he's put into place. We must not let atheists, through their secularization of science, steal from us the works that God does through process. Creation and evolution aren't necessarily contradictory.

Who will you be cheering for when synod meets? I think we should not give a full-throated cheer for any position. We still see only in part, and we also prophesy in part. More evidence will be coming through in future years. Synod and its report won't settle forever the contentious questions. Its decisions will just be a pointer on the road. The question is whether it will point in a good direction.

Contact Calvinist

A special insert for members of the Christian Reformed Church

The president of Synod 1990 speaks out

On April 15 and 16 of this year some 30 leaders of the Christian Reformed Church got together for a conference at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. The object of the conference was to discuss the present situation in the CRC after the unexpected decision by Synod 1990 to open all the offices of the church to its female members according to the discretion of local churches. The conference also looked at the report on the relation of the Bible to science which will come before synod this year. These two issues more than any others are at the moment threatening to cause a significant split in some congregations.

Rev. Howard D. Vanderwell, pastor of Hillcrest CRC in Hudsonville, Mich., and president of Synod 1990, presented a paper that analysed what happened at synod and what the situation is like since synod.

Calvinist Contact was approached by Dr. John VanderStelt of Dordt College, who attended the April 15, 16 conference, and was asked to publish Howard Vanderwell's paper. VanderStelt and others felt that it would be good for members of the CRC to hear what someone who had been at the heart of the deliberations thinks happened at synod last year and what, according to him, the situation has been like since that time. Because the official publication of the Christian Reformed Church, *The Banner*, has a lead time of six weeks before the publication of each issue, it was not able to print this material before Synod 1991 meets. For that reason, we at *Calvinist Contact* have decided to publish the material (our lead time is two weeks).

We realize that we are departing somewhat from our regular route; we are not officially a CRC paper; but desperate times sometimes require desperate measures. Perhaps this analysis by the highly respected Howard Vanderwell will help to make people understand that, whatever they think of the results of Synod 1990, there was something almost inescapable about the outcome, and it would be a mistake to condemn the men who participated in the process. Perhaps it will evoke in these readers who are troubled by the decision a respect for the way our leaders have conducted themselves in what undoubtedly were extremely difficult circumstances.

Bert Witvoet
Editor

The 'women in office' decision of the CRC

What happened at Synod 1990 and why?

Howard D. Vanderwell

I'm eager to share some of my thoughts and insights with members of the Christian Reformed Church on what happened at Synod 1990, as well as on the situation that has developed since. Yet I do so with considerable hesitancy, for it is no easy task. I feel like a child who needs to interpret my mother's behaviour to the rest of the brothers and sisters of the family, when mother's behaviour isn't so easily interpreted.

Or perhaps I feel like the Apostle Paul who says in the seventh chapter of Romans that he finds it difficult, even impossible, to interpret his own behaviour. He admits, "I do not understand what I do...." At the same time he also feels the need to press on and point to some considerations that will begin to explain his behaviour.

I have similar thoughts about the behaviour of the Synod 1990. I do not profess to fully understand what it has done, or, more particularly, why and how it has done what it has done. Not only was it a surprise to me to be placed in the chairman's role at synod, it was also a surprise to me that synod made the decision that it did about women in office. And, I think, it really was a surprise to most of the delegates, and certainly to the church at large. I did not look for that decision to be made, and I made it clear to the delegates at the end of synod that I did not support it. As a matter of fact, the only vote I cast at synod was a negative vote on the issue we're concerned about here. I think it's important that you know that and bear it in mind as you hear the remainder of what I have to say on this matter.

Discernible trends

I have relived that debate time and again during the past nine months, trying to analyse what really happened and why it happened. I have listened again to the nearly nine hours of discussion and debate on tape, all the while asking myself what factors caused the outcome of that vote.

So I will venture to give some of my insights in the hope that they are not in the category of rushing in where angels fear to tread. I give these insights and conclusions in the hope they will help members of the Christian Reformed Church to understand better just what went on during those two days in June. I make no pretense to fully understand what all influenced it, for there is much more in the life of synod and the church as a whole than meets the eye, even the trained eye. But I do believe that there are certain observable and discernible trends and indicators that will help us, both concerning synod and concerning the church post-synod. And those I shall endeavour to set before you.

Admittedly, my perceptions of both synod and the church are subjective. I aim not to defend or justify what synod has done, only to make an attempt at explaining how it was that this decision came about. I offer these insights therefore, for people's consideration and benefit, but also for their reactions and evaluations.

A spirit of anticipation

Let's begin with the situation during synod. It was obvious when the delegates gathered for the opening of synod that highest on everyone's mind was the awareness that this was the synod which was going to have to face the big question about "women in office" once again and would have to make a far-reaching decision one way or another. It was a question delegates would be able to side-step only at their own peril. Consequently, through all synod's work during the first week, it was apparent that all the delegates had their eye on Monday, June 18, when the women in office report would be coming.

Such a spirit of anticipation fueled, I believe, the impulse to pray at this synod. You've undoubtedly heard about that and it's a mark of this synod that has been much maligned. But I must tell you that this is the seventh synod I've attended as a delegate, and at none of the previous synods did I experience and observe such an earnestness in prayer. Before sessions, during sessions and after sessions there was a seeking for wisdom, insight, courage and obedience. Even those of us who do not agree with the final decision cannot discount the responsibility of seriously wrestling with the significance of such a reality.

Day of deliberation

Synod gathered on that Monday in the atmosphere of great anticipation. It all began at the opening of the Monday afternoon session when Rev. Derk Pierik came forward with the majority report (asking that churches be permitted to use their discretion in utilizing the gifts of female members in all the offices of the church), and Rev. Ed Tamminga came forward for the minority report (asking that synod not hand Report 26 to the churches for their understanding and reflection on the issue, but instead continue, and augment the committee with an expanded mandate).

Throughout that afternoon and evening debate took place. It was thorough, cordial, congenial and at times very passionate. It never became acrimonious or angry. By the time we adjourned Monday evening at 9:30 p.m., synod had bounced back and forth between the majority and minority recommendations. The only major decision it had made at that point was the defeat of the minority recommendation to continue and augment the committee with an expanded mandate.

In retrospect, synod had tipped its hand at that time; yet most could not believe or anticipate the outcome that would eventually result the next day. Indeed, I think few really foresaw the outcome until the ballots were actually counted at noon the next day.

Day of decision

The debate resumed Tuesday morning with the majority of the advisory committee coming with a reformulation of its recommendations on the basis of the previous day's debate. I made it clear to the delegates during the debate that the final vote on the major recommendation would be taken by secret ballot. That ballot was taken at the close of the Tuesday-morning session, and by a vote of 99-84 the recommendation of the majority of the advisory committee was passed.

For a couple more hours synod considered church order changes, the timing of ratification and various other matters related to the reactions to and implementation of this decision.

That's what synod did and how it did it. A much bigger and tougher question is *why* it did it. Let's turn to that.

Photo: Courtesy *The Banner*

Howard D. Vanderwell

As my way of trying to answer that question as comprehensively as I can, let me set before you a number of threads that were woven very influentially through the two days of consideration of this issue. I sensed these at the time, and in my reflections after synod, I have been confirmed in seeing these as the dominant influences at synod. I do not list these in any order of priority, and surely there is a great deal of overlap between them. Nor does any one of these, by itself, present an explanation for what happened. It is only through the combination of all these elements that the end result can be at least partially explained.

Factors behind the decision

I present this dissection of synod to you as a helpful attempt to understand what molded the mind and spirit of synod as it made this momentous decision.

1. Frustration with Report 26.

The church had eagerly anticipated Report 26 for some time, hoping that it would help us once and for all break the log-jam in the church and give direction to the synod. But such was not to be. A report that said "on the one hand" and "on the other hand" not only dashed the hopes of the delegates for a clear sense of direction, but produced a frustration within them that significantly tempered their reactions to the issue. A dozen speeches articulated that sentiment eloquently. Consequently, synod found itself facing this major issue in a vacuum.

2. Impatience with further study

"What's the use? It isn't going to help!" was the cry of a good many voices. If studies in 1973, 1975, 1978, 1981, 1984, and now another one that comes in 1990 can't really give us direction in solving the issue, what hope can we have that one more will accomplish what all these have not been able to accomplish? Another study committee won't solve it, and the folks back home won't stand for another one anyway. It was that kind of impatience with further study that led to the defeat of the recommendation of the minority of the advisory committee. And once the possibility of further study was eliminated, the options open to synod narrowed down considerably.

3. Differences of interpretation

Synod is a deliberative assembly. It's not a Bible study group, nor is it a classroom in which teaching goes on. Yet the charge that synod virtually set aside the Bible before making its decision is simply not true or fair. A dozen-plus speeches were made about each of the following considerations: the biblical reasons for opening the offices to women now; the biblical reasons for not opening the offices to women now; the issue of hermeneutics, perspectives and cultural conditioning.

For some the issue was so clear and simple, for others not. The questions of hermeneutics surfaced over and over. "Protological" and "eschatological" became familiar terms on the synod floor. It became clear that the delegates had done their Bible study before arriving at synod, and what became even more clear was that even through all that study of both the Scriptures and the issues involved, differences of interpretation could not be resolved.

4. Inadequacy of historical position

During the past 20 years so many considerations had been raised that pointed to the legitimacy of changing our position, so many voices were heard proposing that throughout the church, so many speeches had been made at synod about that, that finally the delegates began to wonder if our historic position was as water-tight as we were once convinced it was. To take a firm stand that refused to open the offices to all church members would require strong evidence. The speeches at synod pointing to such evidence were not particularly convincing or persuasive. At that point synod's courage to continue binding the conscience of those who were willing to open all the offices cracked.

"'Protological' and 'eschatological' became familiar terms on the synod floor."

5. I-changed-my-mind

Don't underestimate the significant influence that is levied by credible delegates, both pastors and elders, who will stand up and say, "I used to think this way...but now...." Such speeches give tacit approval to such changes of position, particularly when given by recognized and reliable delegates. Every time another such speech is given, a few more votes are garnered from those who previously were uncertain what their position on the issue should be. And there were a number of such speeches.

6. Consensus unachievable.

Perhaps there were many hopes and convictions when this whole debate began 20 years ago that the church would be able to work its way through it all and arrive at a consensus. Perhaps some of that hope even remained as we approached 1990; but it soon evaporated, burned off by the consensus-is-impossible message of Report 26. And whatever vestiges of such a hope remained could never survive in the debate of Monday afternoon and evening. It was obvious there would never be a consensus in the CRC on the issue. There's no sense holding out for it. It can't be done. Therefore, we're going to have to make a hard decision in which we will not be able to avoid the ire of a large portion of the church, no matter what decision is reached.

7. Diversity acceptable

"Diversity is acceptable" was a companion theme of "consensus-is-unachievable." It is acceptable to take different positions. Scripture on this matter is not all as crystal clear as some seem to think it is, and as we all once thought it was. Report 26, while it frustrated us, told us that it's OK for those committed to the authority of Scripture to arrive at different conclusions on this particular matter, all the while holding to Reformed principles of interpretation. Then the vision began to grow in the minds of synod's delegates of a church that accepts the reality of granting its members the right to take different positions on this issue without being liable to the charge of heresy.

And as we think about the "diversity-is-acceptable" mood that developed we should not discount the influence of the very non-traditional prayer service at the Oakdale Park CRC which began synod (while yet teaching us to pray more than ever), and the significance of the multi-ethnic conference and its worship service on campus at the same time.

8. Change inevitable

A mood of resignation was present among some delegates at the beginning of synod, and developed among others during the course of the debate. It was a resignation that recognized that a process was taking place and we were located midway in that process that had begun some 20 years before and had accumulated sufficient momentum so that it would be virtually impossible to stop or redirect it. "The momentum is on," this mood said. "Consensus is unachievable, diversity is acceptable, change on this matter is inevitable, and there will never be a good and easy time to make such a contested decision, so now is probably as good as later. We might as well bite the bullet and do it now." Such a viewpoint produces reluctant votes, but they are votes nonetheless.

9. Using women's gifts

For a good many years the church had said that we have previously erred in not fully utilizing the gifts the Spirit of God had distributed among the women of the church. For years the church had been wrestling with this issue. In the early part of this century it was the issue of women's suffrage in national elections. Then it shifted to women's suffrage in the church, granted in 1957. Then in the mid-'70s it focused on the use of women's gifts and abilities in the church. That whole process was another major thrust behind the debate at synod this year.

I know some have severely criticized synod as selling out to the feminist movement, but the spirit at synod was not an expression of rank feminism so much as an attempt to find a greater place in the life of the church for those gifts the Spirit had obviously given the saints who are women. This decision, therefore, was seen as one more necessary step in that direction.

10. The desire to be progressive

I know the word "progressive" is emotion-laden and easily misunderstood, but I'll take that risk and say that synod perceived of "being progressive" as necessary for a church that was to move into the '90s and subsequently the 21st century in such a way that it could be a respectable force with which to be reckoned. There seemed to be a desire at synod to reshape the stance of the CRC from a tradition-laden church that looks to the past, more reactive than proactive, to a church with a fresh new outlook capable of taking the truth of God responsibly and relevantly into a new century. To do so meant being willing to challenge long-held traditions that might not be sufficiently grounded.

"Such a spirit of anticipation fueled, I believe, the impulse to pray at this synod."

Photo: Courtesy *The Banner*

Some significant missing ingredients.

I cannot complete this section without pointing to what I feel was missing from the whole process.

a. Nature of the issue

A consensus was missing on whether this is just a church order matter or a confessional/creedal matter. It is true that the majority included the statement of the synod of 1989 that this "has not been regarded as a creedal matter, but as a Church Order matter" (Synod 1989, p. 433). This was one of the grounds in synod's decision in 1989 not to sustain the appeal of Dr. Norman De Jong re the September 15, 1988, decision of Classis Grand Rapids East.) It's my judgment there was and is no consensus of agreement on the validity of such a statement. That statement needed more attention.

b. Confusing signals

An up-front sense of direction for synod was missing. In the absence of any direction from Report 26, and in the conflicting directions that various overtures presented, synod had no direction set. It was forced to work in a vacuum. Synods don't usually work well in those conditions. Consequently, the present decision is one that synod "backed into." It's a position that was written by a portion of an advisory committee during synod, revised during debate, and consequently only inadequately substantiated in its grounds.

c. No strong opposition

Effective conservative voices were missing. Though there were many speeches made opposing the recommendation that was adopted, synod saw no significant, influential and effective spokesmen appear to state the cause of the opposition and garner more votes against the considered proposal.

d. Belated anxiety

A knowledgeable pastoral concern was missing. Though a number of voices were raised about how the folks back home would feel and react, and though a number of delegates spoke about efforts that would be needed to explain and defend synod's actions afterwards, the focus of the debate seemed to sidestep a hearty concern for what could be done to lovingly meet the mind and spirit of the church that would be troubled regardless of what decision was made. It wasn't until after the major decision was made on Tuesday morning that delegates began giving expression to their anxieties about what this decision would do to the life of the church. At that point the consideration of a two-year ratification plan, the possibility of postponing the delegation of women to broader assemblies for five years, and the publication of educational materials such as the *Women In Office* booklet by CRC Publications surfaced. Suddenly the pain in the churches became much more real to the delegates.

I acknowledge that these observations are, by their very nature, subjective because they've all been processed through my own efforts to study what happened. I believe they can be substantiated and I present them to you for your better understanding of "how 1990 happened." I repeat that none of them individually is sufficiently weighty to explain what happened, but all of them together do.

What happened after Synod 1990?

We must now turn our attention to the sequel of those two weeks in June. It is amazing how one vote by 184 delegates can have such repercussions, for good or harm, in the life of a denomination. If it is difficult to analyze what really is happening at synod, it is doubly difficult to do so for the entire church. But that's my *assignment, so let me venture some* observations about that matter. I've tried my best to stay in touch with what has been happening in the church in the past nine months. I've read articles, carried on correspondence and listened to tapes. These observations are based on that. Again, I stress that none of these reactions represents a majority. None stand out way above the rest. All together function as a matrix of what is and has been a troubled CRC.

Photo: Bert Witvoet

1. The full range of emotions.

It is almost an understatement to say that we've been an emotional denomination for the past nine months. All kinds of emotions have surfaced:

a. There is surprise. It was there immediately. I think there was a good deal of surprise at synod among the delegates when the final votes were tallied; there was surprise in the gallery; there was surprise in the news reports that went out; and there certainly was surprise throughout the churches. Folks just couldn't believe that synod really did what it did.

b. There is delight. It was present among those who had worked toward this permission for women for a long time. Finally, they had won. Their joy and delight could hardly be contained. They made plans for the implementation of this decision, and some of them have even gone ahead in violation of synod's stipulation there be no implementation until after due ratification.

c. There is anger. Deep disappointment quickly turns to anger and a sense of betrayal. Many in the church feel betrayed by its broadest assembly. Their pain is deep and sharp. I've read it in articles. I've received it in letters to my address. And we'll hear much of it in forthcoming synods.

d. There is grief. It's a sense of loss of something dear, and such a sense of loss brings searing pain with it. Many grieve over what they perceive as the loss of a biblically-based CRC, or perhaps a loss of all the traditions they once felt so comfortable with, or at the very least of a healthy, wholesome and unified denomination.

2. Much study

In addition to the full range of emotions, there is also a new motivation to study the issue. It seems a shame that this comes so late. It should have been done so much more comprehensively before all this. CRC Publications reports that the sales of *Women In Office* have far exceeded their expectations. They've now sold over 8,500 copies and it has gone into its fourth printing. Councils are studying it together. Adult education classes are dealing with the issue. Consistorial conferences and retreats are called to study the matter. That's a healthy and wholesome motivation. A welcome one, indeed.

3. Hardened positions

But, sadly, there are also terminated dialogues. Persons and groups who found it difficult to communicate together before now find it impossible. Editorials and essays have become shouting matches. Mail is acrimonious and judgmental. Dialogues become a call to repentance. Positions are now hardened and polarized. Recent attempts by the *Banner* to present the matter in a balanced fashion are not given a fair hearing. And the cry is heard, "No longer is it a time to talk; now is the time to act."

"Many grieve over...a loss of all the traditions."

4. A loss of confidence

Though the CRC has never been real bullish on its future, it generally has managed to be fairly confident. Well, a great deal of that now seems to have been lost. We are travelling, many feel, down a highway that includes nothing more than a dead end. The CRC that will return from that experience will be a smaller, weaker denomination, wracked with wounds. Some call it schism, others call it secession, but all sense that it may be inevitable.

"Gathering God's Growing Family," which once captured our interest and stirred our vision, has ominous clouds hanging over it. We fear not only that our membership will be reduced, with the resultant embarrassment that will involve, but our denominational mission and educational agencies will experience the wrenching pain of having less resources and support available.

We also are fearing, I think, that we will move into another chapter of our history in which our energies will be sapped by the kinds of inter-family squabbling that our tensions with the Protestant Reformed Church caused in a previous generation. The Christian Reformed Church that was emerging from its adolescence to take its place among the prominent evangelical denominations of our day now feels its hopes significantly tarnished by internal dissensions.

What happened after Synod 1990? ...continued

5. Bigger issues

There is an impatience with those who lead, which stems from a general feeling that the issues that are currently consuming so much of the time and energy of the church are not really worth that large an investment. "So what's the big deal?" they exclaim. One letter to the *Banner* put it so poignantly, "I, for one, am totally fed up with this debate about women in church office. While we sit in our easy chairs discussing all kinds of trendy things, millions of abortions are taking place, the Russians are still persecuting Christians and Jews, and Armageddon is just around the corner" (*The Banner*, Neil Glass, Kleinburg, Ont., 3/25/91).

We have such a big task trying to figure out how to live Christianly in a secular society that we shouldn't have time or energy to invest in these issues that some perceive to be inconsequential and parochial. Such a cry of impatience comes, I know, from a church that by-and-large doesn't have a lot of stomach today for theological debates. And so the energy consumed by such debates only gives them greater reason to justify their decreased denominational loyalty.

6. Distrust of agencies and leaders.

There seems to be a perception in the church at large that says agencies and their leaders are the ones who have gotten us into this present explosive mess. It's a perception that the thrust for women-in-office has largely originated there. And this has resulted in the development of an adversarial stance toward many denominational agencies. They, that bureaucracy, are our real problem. It was on *their* agenda and they've forced it on to *our* agenda and now we're all stuck with it.

Consequently, there is great suspicion toward such agencies. Letters are written to each agency asking them to clearly state their official position on the issue. Quotas, and the withholding of such, naturally become the most convenient weapons under circumstances like that. And denominational loyalty consequently takes another nosedive.

7. Accumulation of disappointments.

Everyone has disappointments with others, and so long as the load does not become too heavy they can live with them. Children have disappointments with some of the actions of their employers. Parishioners have them about us as pastors. Members have disappointments with some of the actions of the church council. And most can live with those things...until so many disappointments are accumulated that they become linked together and the load gets too heavy.

Such accumulation through linkage seems to be happening today; then the women-in-office decision is seen as only one more in a long list of disappointments. Consequently this issue takes on greater significance than it would have if it stood alone, and it is seen as a promise of more and perhaps even greater disappointments to come. You've heard the list, too. Worship practices are changing; Sunday evening attendance is slipping; Sabbath observance is eroding; movies are acceptable; dancing is permissable; divorce-and-remarriage guidelines are too lax; church discipline is less than it ought to be; and women are serving as deacons.

By the time you link all of those together, the conclusion is drawn that spiritual erosion is so severe it won't be long before homosexuals are offering communion! Consequently, one issue is greatly magnified in its significance.

8. Unresolved questions.

But in addition to all these dynamics that are happening in the church, post-synod, there are a number of very critical questions that are right at the heart of the church today but remain unresolved, and are unresolved because we haven't focused the attention on them that they require. They are indeed critical questions, but in our push to resolve one question we too easily sidestep the even bigger attendant questions.

Let me present the questions I think we've left unresolved that beg for attention. They are not separate questions and include a good bit of overlap.

a) What criteria do we use and what principles can we develop to determine what in the Scriptures is normative and what is culturally conditioned?

b) Is the women-in-office issue merely a church order matter, or is it a creedal matter? On what basis did the Synod 1989 call it a church order matter and can that claim be substantiated?

c) What tests must we apply to determine and validate the orthodoxy of the church? In other words, are the marks of the true church according to Article 29 of the *Belgic Confession* still valid and exclusive, or do we apply a different standard today? And how broad and inclusive are those three marks?

d) What is schism and what is secession; how are they different and how do we determine each?

e) What degree of diversity, and on what issues, is acceptable in the church today? In other words, which issues are worth tearing the life and energies of the church apart?

f) How does one live and serve and lead in a church in which he takes exception to certain important decisions?

"We have such a big task trying to figure out how to live Christianly in a secular society...."

Conclusion

As I see it, this is the situation in the church today. The Christian Reformed Church is a church I love and to which I have devoted my life and ministry, too. I feel the pain that all have felt during the past nine months. I live with the surprise of what synod did last year. I have studied carefully how and why it did what it did. I have tried to stay abreast of what it has done since. And I offer these observations and insights to you in the hopes that they have sufficient accuracy to assist us in not only understanding our mother and her behaviour a little better, but that they also may be able to assist us in figuring out how to continue to love her, help her and live together in her.

Photo: Bert Witvoet

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The problem with Howard Van Till's theories is his dualism

A personal view of Report 28 on 'Creation and Science'

Gordon J. Spykman

"Report 28" is out. It is addressed to the Christian Reformed Church Synod of 1991. It deals with the subject "creation and science." This study was commissioned by Synod 1988 in response to a flurry of overtures, protesting a number of ideas published in Howard J. Van Till's book *The Fourth Day*. Ten persons were appointed to this committee, chosen to represent three areas of Christian scholarship: philosophy, the natural sciences and theology. Along the way one member of the committee resigned for personal reasons. In the end, another withheld his signature, arguing that caring for the creation must take priority over debating it. Thus the 46-page report as it now appears in the CRC Agenda for Synod 1991 has been signed by eight committee members.

> The committee was given a three-year mandate which was: *To address the relationship between special and general revelation as found in Belgic Confession Article II and in Report 44 of the Synod of 1972 focusing primarily on the implications for biblical interpretation and the investigation of God's creation. This task should include, but not be limited to, such matters as the following: The concept of "vehicle/packaging/contents," the designation of Genesis 1 as "primeval history," the creation of Adam and Eve in God's image, the fall into sin, and the doctrines of creation and providence as they relate to evolutionary theory. The task should also include an investigation of the difference, if any, in our subjection to God's special and God's general revelation.* (*Acts of Synod 1988*, p. 598)

In working its way through the committee's mandate the report arrives at roughly 20 conclusions which synod will be asked to consider. These are divided into three categories: a) matters that call for the attention of the church; b) declarations on crucial issues; and c) pastoral advice to all participants in these discussions. The signers of the report are agreed on all these points except one; the question of the origin of the human race.

It should be understood that I am not writing this article on behalf of the committee, of which I am a member; nor even as a member of the committee, but only as a fellow member of the CRC community — though perhaps with a bit of an inside track.

But why write this article at all? And why at this time? I intend it basically to promote clarity. Judging by casual contacts and informal discussions it seems to me that many readers are failing to see clearly the connections between these recommendations to synod and the issues as they have surfaced among us in the recent years. What I intend to do, therefore, is to make the connections more explicitly clear. In what follows I shall quote from some of the major recommendations in the report. In each case I shall then point out in what sense these various recommendations are called forth by one or another problematic issue in the current controversy. The report stands as a response to these issues.

To point out the connections I shall cite passages from two books. Both of these sources are in circulation among us, and both are part of the on-going disputes. The one is *The Fourth Day* by Howard Van Till; the other is jointly authored by Clarence Mennenga, Davis Young, and Van Till and is entitled, *Science Held Hostage*.

Five theses

First, the report calls the attention of the churches to its "Summary of Conclusions." Under this heading the report lists nine points. I shall quote five and comment briefly on them.

Categorical complementarity

1. *The Reformed understanding of the mutual inter-relationship of special and general revelation contains within it an inherent bias against any dualism which declares that areas of reality can be isolated from the impact of either general or special revelation. Although what that impact is can be determined only by faithful and patient openness to what God is saying through both revelations, the church should not hesitate to warn against any view of science which in principle rules out the influence of faith, the norms of general revelation, or the light of Scripture from scientific theorizing.*

This thesis results from and comes in response to the understanding which shapes both *The Fourth Day* and *Science Held Hostage*. Their central organizing principle is the idea of "categorical complementarity." A dualist worldview undergirds this commitment. Created reality is divided into "scientific and religious domains of concern" (*Science Held Hostage*, 10, 19, 42). This perspective involves "Two principal headings: internal affairs, which are the domain of the natural sciences, and external relationships, which are the domain of philosophy and theology — and ultimately of scriptural authority" (*The Fourth Day*, 194). Great importance is attached to "the distinction between the domains of inherent intelligibility [scientific knowledge equally accessible to all] and transcendent relationship" (*Science Held Hostage*, 20).

This dichotomy is not a passing thought. It is in fact "the heart of the matter" (*The Fourth Day*, 208). In keeping with this outlook, "the concept of creation is a thoroughly theistic concept and therefore lies outside the domain of natural science" (*ibid.*, 271). For natural science treats the world as "a self-contained entity" (*ibid.*, 61), "A thing in itself" (*ibid.*, 92). It can say "nothing positive, nothing negative, just nothing at all" on non-scientific matters (*ibid.*, 99, 105, 119, 197, 198, 202, 207).

Such ideas have their very direct consequences in education. For "the evaluation of scientific theories is an activity appropriate for the science classroom. The evaluation of religious perspectives, however, might better be carried out in a different context" (*Science Held Hostage*, 151). Accordingly, "Questions about the relationship of the physical universe to transcendent or nonmaterial beings, such as God or angels, lie outside the scientific domain" (*ibid.*, 127). Again, "discussions about God, providence or ethics are, by their very nature, not scientific discussions, because their subject matter lies outside the province of natural science" (*ibid., 128-29*). So "Science has nothing to say about aesthetics and morality" (*ibid.*, 134). For "by its very nature [science] cannot make ethical judgments but only describes the world," since "natural events are neither good nor evil, they just are" (*ibid.*, 138).

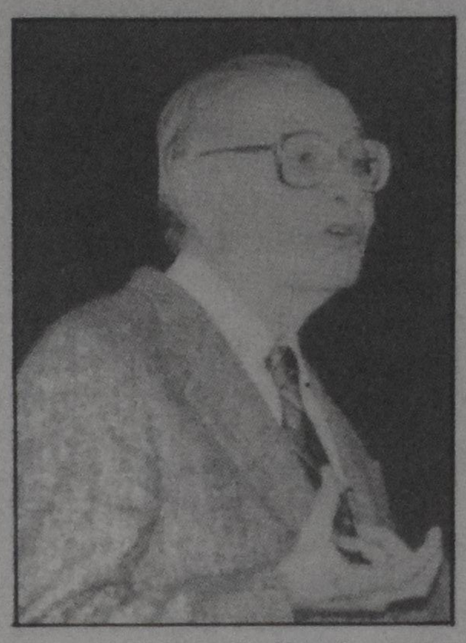

Photo: Courtesy ICS

Gordon J. Spykman

This dualist model of reality draws clearly a sharp line of demarcation between the "internal affairs" of the cosmos and the "external relationship" of God to the cosmos. It brings with it an equally sharp dichotomy between the natural sciences, on the one hand, and theology/philosophy/scriptural authority, on the other hand.

This view of reality creates far more problems than it solves. How, for instance, are we to reconcile this theory with a coherently integrated Reformed worldview which holds that life is of one piece? This view of the scientific method stands, therefore, as a profound challenge to a Reformed understanding of Christian scholarship. Given, moreover, a Reformed conception of the "mutual interdependence" of general and special revelation, is not such a dividing of the field a cheap and easy way to evade the "integration of faith and learning" mandate?

The form/content hermeneutic

2. *A biblical hermeneutic which is based on any kind of separation of form from content, of vehicle from message, of packaging from content, cannot do justice to the interpretation of Scripture, since the very form of Scriptural revelation is integral to its meaning.*

This form/content hermeneutic was the dominant method of biblical interpretation in the liberal tradition of the 19th and 20th century. It is now thoroughly discredited. I know of no reputable Reformed theologian who would advocate it. Yet here it comes back in support of the "creationomic perspective."

Note the following passages: "...The Bible can be viewed as a complete unit, including the vehicle (literary genre), packaging (specific story, symbols, etc.), and contents (God's message to us)" (*The Fourth Day*, 15). Accordingly the author advocates a "vehicle-packaging-content approach" to biblical interpretation (*ibid.*, 18). Thus, the stories serve as "packaging that contains the message-content conveyed by the vehicle of primeval history" (*ibid.*, 82). On this view we must recognize in Genesis 1 "an artistic illustration of an external covenantal relationship" (*ibid.*, 240, 270). Failure to distinguish form and content would be "as foolish as attempting to eat a granola bar without first removing it from its wrapper or, more absurd yet, without distinguishing it from the truck that delivered it to the store" (*ibid.*, 16). For "if we attempt to consume both the content and the packaging, we may encounter significant difficulty in chewing, swallowing, and digesting the combination. Those who want to feed on the truth of Scripture must take care to differentiate between food and packaging" (*ibid.*, 83).

The wrapping, it seems, is the concrete literary form of the text and its down-to-earth historical situation. If we discard this, what then is left? Only the idea of a "transcendent relationship." Then the Genesis narratives are really not about origins at all, but about a sense of absolute dependence on God. Yet they claim to say something about beginnings. Is this then not a case of grievous deception?

Lack of clarity

3. *The concept of Primeval History can be used appropriately only if it retains an essential connection to history, in the sense of affirming the event-character of the narrative. The precise nature of this essential connection to history is a legitimate arena of inquiry, using whatever knowledge is available from both special and general revelation. It is consistent with sound Reformed exegesis, moreover, to acknowledge that the historical narratives of Genesis 1-11, like those of other parts of Scripture, are stylized and compressed, and may not follow a chronological order. It is also consistent with sound Reformed exegesis to acknowledge that the historical narratives of Genesis 1-11 may be theologically stylized, so that a historical event or entity is shaped in the narrative to carry a theological significance far beyond the historical event or entity on which the narrative*

Continued on page 12....

Some statements lack clarity and humility

...continued from page 11.

is based.

In *The Fourth Day* the Genesis narratives are often viewed as poetic, symbolic, parabolic descriptions. However, there are also statements which lend these narratives a firmer footing. Note the following: "The human history recorded in Scripture is genuine human history" (*ibid.*, 8). And again, "Primal history is as much our experience as it is anyone's... Though it is not to be taken literally, it is to be taken seriously" (*ibid.*, 83). It is nevertheless, to be distinguished from "patriarchal history."

An appeal to Report 44's repeated emphasis on "event-character" would have been helpful in clarifying what is meant by these concepts. Report 44 stresses consistently "the historical reality of the events therein recorded." Failing in this, the views under discussion suffer from a "lack of clarity and precision."

Lack of humility

4. ... *Thus all sides in the debates about origins should acknowledge that they do not have a completely satisfactory solution to the problem, and that therefore certain criticisms made by some of their opponents are at least partially justified...*

This note of caution, calling for humility, tentativity, and mutual submission, is prompted by certain heavy-handed put-downs in some of the literature. The traditional view of the Genesis narrative is "summarily dismissed" as "meaningless speculation" and "entirely irrelevant." It offers only "meaningless explanations," arising from a "nonsense question," actually a "non-question." In support of this critique it is argued that "nonsense questions generate only nonsense answers," for "bring nonsense questions, and you will get only nonsense answers" (*ibid.*, 90-91).

Gradualistic worldview

5. *The Creation account (Genesis 1:1—2:3) accents clearly the idea of separation — distinction, diversity, differentiation — in God's original work of creation and in created reality as we experience it today. It reveals the absolutely fundamental distinction between Creator and creature, as well as the lines of demarcation repeatedly drawn between various orders of created reality.*

In the biblical worldview as reflected in the Genesis narratives, the emphasis falls on the successive appearance of new orders of reality. All things are created "after their kind." This repeated accent on "separation" stands diametrically opposed to the gradualistic worldview implied in evolutionary theories.

The literature under consideration holds that "we are creatures (members of God's Creation) whose capacity for the awareness of self, of God, and of our responsibility for obedience of divine mandates has been formed through a process of continuous evolutionary development." This worldview is not judged to be "inappropriate or incongruous or unbiblical." There is, in fact, "no reason whatsoever to deny that the Creation might have an evolutionary history or that morally responsible creatures might have been formed through the process of evolutionary development" (*ibid.*, 258).

At his point, it appears abundantly clear that we are confronted with a head-on clash of paradigms — worldviews in conflict, views of reality on collision course.

Declarations

Report 28 then moves on to recommend that synod make the following "declarations."

Integration of faith and science

1. *The church confesses that both general and special revelation, each in its own unique way, address us with full divine authority. We affirm, therefore, that the whole of life must be lived in obedience to God and in subjection to his Word, that faith and life must be of one piece. This is true as much of science as it is of personal relationships, business practices, or politics. We reject any view of the Christian faith which limits its scope, or any view of science which in principle excludes from its practice the influence of faith and the light of Scripture. On the contrary, we actively encourage the kind of Christian scholarship which challenges the secular assumption of the academic mainstream by advocating the integration of Christian faith and learning.*

At stake here is the question of the alleged "religious neutrality" of the scientific enterprise. This declaration also raises serious questions about the definition of science as it functions in the two books under consideration. Science is there reduced to "purely technical operations." We are then asked to embrace it as "religiously blind" (*ibid.*, 215). This therefore comes down once again to a Reformed understanding of Christian scholarship.

We are told that doing science is as "religiously neutral as dialing a telephone" (*ibid.*, 209) or "baking a cake" (*ibid.*, 214). Undergirding such claims is the thesis that "natural science excludes from its consideration the very dimension that the Bible emphasizes" (*ibid.*, 64). And again, "Scriptural exegesis and natural science deal with mutally exclusive sets of questions" (*ibid.*, 271).

Accordingly, a distinctively Christian way of doing science is by definition ruled out, for the "inherent intelligibility" of the universe suggests that the data of creation is equally understandable to all observers (*Science Held Hostage*, 18). After all, "the domain of contemporary natural science...is the inherent intelligibility of the physical universe" (*ibid.*, 143, 144, 146). Again, "Science is unable...to say anything about the relationship of the world to a divine Creator" (*ibid.*, 19). It is accordingly "wholly incapable of discovering [the creation's] meaning" (*The Fourth Day*, 16). Is science then a meaningless enterprise? For it cannot make "moral" or "aesthetic" judgments, nor offer "guidance on how to use [its] knowledge" (*Science Held Hostage*, 134). Thus, wherever "science [is] held hostage" to religion, it must be liberated from such "religious commitment" (*ibid.*, 153).

Freedom of exegesis

2. *The church wishes to honour its commitment to the freedom of exegesis by not imposing upon its members an authorized interpretation of specific passages in Scripture, insisting only that such exegetical freedom be carried on within the limits of the analogy of Scripture and the confessional guidelines of its creeds.*

The concern here is to safeguard the integrity of the biblical account of creation. This revelation comes in the form of historical narratives. Variations in its interpretation are allowable, however, as long as they honour the event-character of these narratives in keeping with Report 44's repeated emphasis on "the historical reality of the events therein recorded."

Freedom of science

3. *The church wishes also to respect the freedom of science by not canonizing certain hypotheses, models, or paradigms proposed by the sciences while rejecting others, insisting only that all such theorizing be subject to the teaching of Scripture and the confessions.*

The concern here is to safeguard the legitimacy of the scientific enterprise as an important expression of the cultural mandate. It is an honourable Christian calling. Christian freedom therefore holds in doing science as well as in doing theology. It holds, in fact, in every calling, scholarly and otherwise. The concern of Report 28, moreover, is not at all to raise questions concerning the personal faith of those involved in the "creation/evolution" debates. Its concern is rather with the pros and cons of the views expressed. It therefore holds that academic freedom, like all freedom, truly manifests the marks of Christian freedom when it operates in harmony with a commonly held core of confessional commitments.

The question of human origins

4. It is at this point that consensus within the committee breaks down. The result is a parting of the ways. The bone of contention involves what nearly everyone regards as a very crucial aspect in the ongoing debate, namely the question of human origins. This impasse in the committee leads to five members taking a majority position over against a minority of two. A third member agrees with the minority position, but does not wish synod to speak on the matter under dispute.

This question of human origins is an exceedingly sensitive point within our Reformed communities. So much so, in fact, that it threatens to eclipse all the other issues in Report 28. In the long run, however, many of these other issues may be equally important. It would therefore be regrettable if this point, however important, should draw all the fire. For it is actually part of the larger whole.

What then is this very divisive issue? It involves points "E" and "F" in the report. On point "E" the committee speaks with a single voice. It reads as follows: *The church confesses that humanity is uniquely created as image-bearers of God and rejects all theorizing that tends either to minimize or to obliterate this created uniqueness.* The minority of two/three holds that in the current situation synod must clarify the thrust of point "E" by taking the next step. Accordingly, point "F" reads as follows: *The church declares, moreover, that the clear teaching of Scripture and of our confessions on the uniqueness of human beings as image-bearers of God rules out all theories that posit the reality of evolutionary forebears of the human race.*

The reality of Adam and Eve as real historical persons is not a matter of dispute. Nor is the biblical teaching that they were our first parents being called into question. The disputed question is this: Where did they come from? How did they get here? How are we to account for their appearance upon the earthly scene? The minority position rules out all theories that posit the idea of an animal ancestry for the human race. The majority position wishes to keep the door open to this possibility. Report 28 sets both positions over against each other, with grounds for each. So now, Synod of '91 — the next move is yours.

This clear difference of viewpoint arises directly out of the literature under consideration. In addition to the passages cited above (see "Summary Conclusion" no. 5), note the following: "The entire corporeal cosmos and the whole of its evolutionary history are essential for our existence at this moment. From the evidence we gathered, we conclude that the whole of cosmic history is far more than a fascinating story; it is a

Continued on page 13...

CRC

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A conversation with mother

about the age of the earth

C. Gordon Winder

The book The Fourth Day *by Calvin College physics professor Howard Van Till has generated some lively discussion within the Christian Reformed Church. Professor Van Till argues for an old earth. In this article a professional geologist writes his mother, explaining why he also thinks the earth is very old.*

Dear Mother,

From your last letter I gathered that there was a young man at the ladies' auxiliary meeting who said that the earth is only a few thousand years old. Interesting! I trust you spoke up and told him that your son is a geology professor with years of field experience and that he is convinced that the earth is very old.

Whether you did or not, let me provide you with a few points for the next encounter.

In 1795, James Hutton, a resident of Edinburgh, published his book *Theory of the Earth*. Your great-grandmother was born there about that time. Like her, Hutton was a Presbyterian. He trained as a medical doctor but never practised. He farmed southeast of Edinburgh near the English border. In his spare time, he examined the rocks in the area, especially along the sea coast. His conclusions started modern geology.

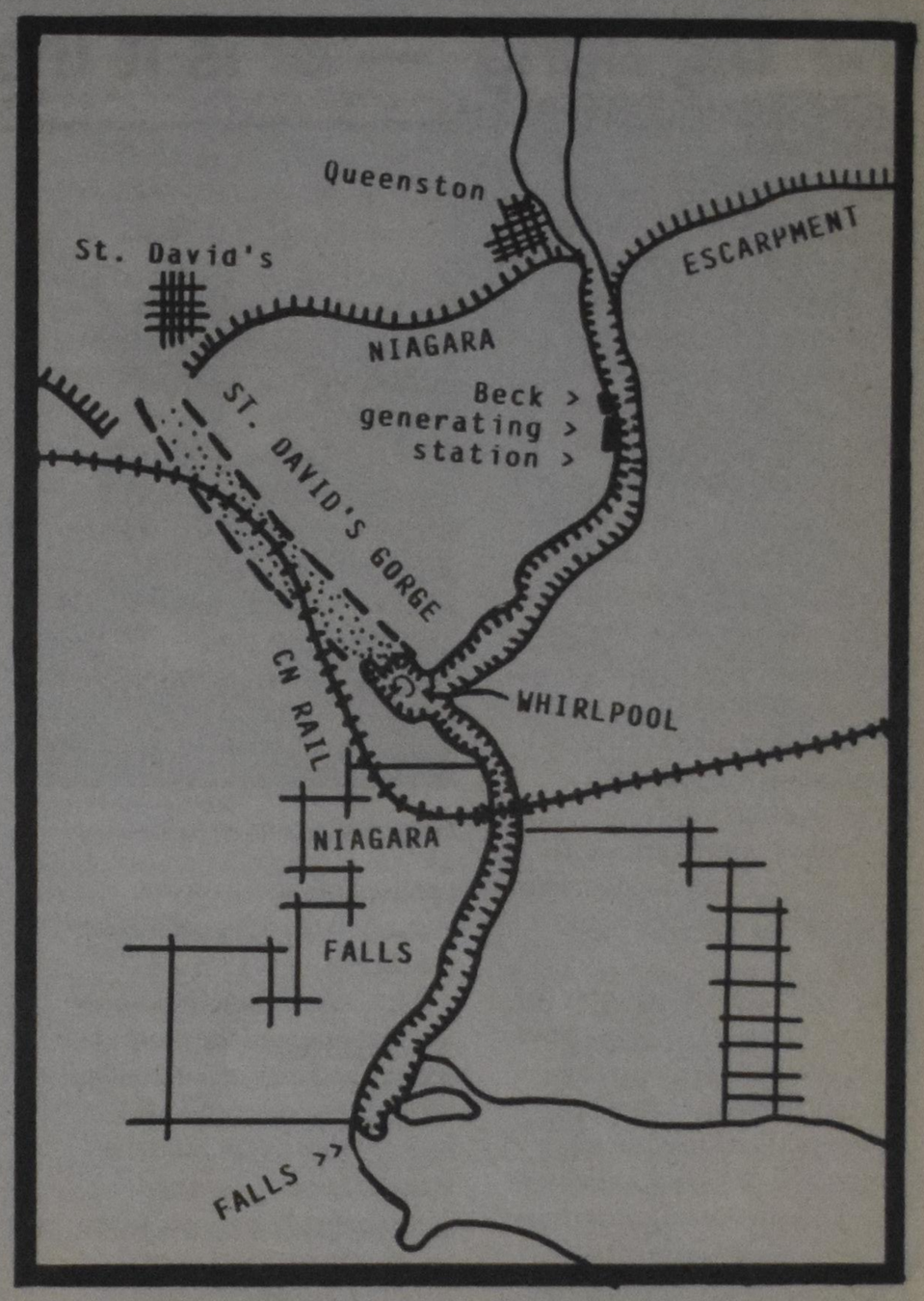
The book he wrote was so difficult to understand that his friend, John Playfair, mathematics professor at Edinburgh University, wrote another book, published in 1802, entitled *Illustrations of the Huttonian Theory of the Earth*. I have a paperback copy. That text is also difficult, but Playfair clarifies one of Hutton's most important conclusions: "We find no vestiges of a beginning, no prospect of an end." What is the message? EARTH MUST BE VERY OLD! Remember, Hutton examined the rocks and recorded the facts!

Consider Adam Sedgwick, an Anglican bishop who was interested in geology. In the 1820s he explored north Wales, where he found a tremendous thickness of slates, sandstones and lavas, with lots of fossils. I have shown you rocks like those. He concluded that the earth is old. Remember, he was an Anglican theologian! He named these rocks the Cambrian, the Welsh name for Wales, and the name is still used by geologists. Eventually Sedgwick was appointed professor of geology at Cambridge University, even though he had never taken any courses in geology. You ask why not? Because geology was not taught in school at that time.

Closer to home, consider William Logan, born a Presbyterian in Montreal in 1798 and educated in Scotland. In the 1830s he mapped the south Wales coal field while he was manager of a copper smelter. He also was a self-taught geologist. His maps were so accurate his name is still on the modern geological maps of Wales. In 1842 he was appointed first director of the Geological Survey of Canada.

His field studies began at Joggins, Nova Scotia, on the south shore of Chignecto Bay at the east end of the Bay of Fundy. We should visit the place sometime. Logan had heard that coal can be found in the cliffs at Joggins and wanted to compare it with the south Wales coals. The rocks are sandstones and shale, and he measured 14,570 feet and 11 inches — a continuous sequence. He recorded 72 thin beds of coal, none thick enough to mine, and petrified tree stumps at 90 levels in the section. Some tree trunks are upright in the rock. Logan published the 60-page description in the first annual report of the Geological Survey. Is there a connection between being a Presbyterian and thinking that the earth is old? NO!

So let's be logical. Could 14,570 feet (that's 4415 metres) of sandstone and shale with 72 coal beds and 90 levels of stumps be deposited in a few thousand years? You think that's possible?



How old is the gorge?

Okay, then, let's consider a tourist attraction which everyone knows and many have seen — the Niagara gorge, which, at the falls, is 55 metres deep and from 100 to 130 metres wide. Downstream from the falls the river curves around to the whirlpool. There, the river makes a right angle turn, and again curving around emerges from the escarpment at Queenston. The distance from the falls along the gorge to the escarpment is roughly 10,000 metres. Experts have examined old records and maps and calculated the rate of erosion at about one metre a year. Yes, I know, Mother, the rate of erosion can vary from year to year, but let's not quibble. Consider the whole story. Do you wish to read the technical reports?

So if the gorge is 10,000 metres long and the rate of erosion is one metre a year, how old is the gorge? That fellow said a few thousand years *for the whole earth?*

But there is more! At the whirlpool, the wall of the gorge in line with the river coming from upstream is covered with trees. *There is no rock*, as in the other walls along the gorge. That wall is loose soil.

A few years ago, geologists drilled some holes in that area and discovered a buried gorge which runs all the way to the village of St. David's. The location coincides with the CN rail line coming up to the top of the escarpment. If that loose soil were excavated there would be a gorge as big as the existing gorge. It was eroded a long time ago and then filled in, before the present gorge was eroded. That buried gorge is 4000 metres long. So, after you add 4,000 metres to the existing 10,000 metres, how long would it have taken all of it to erode?

What age did that fellow suggest for the whole earth?

But there is still more! Consider the rock exposed in the walls of the gorge. If you look down into the gorge, say, at the Beck generating station, you can see at river level a red shale, then above that a grey sandstone, then a green shale, another red shale, a thin limestone, a thick black shale and at the top a thick yellowish limestone. The total thickness is about 100 metres. All have lots of fossils, especially that black shale.

But one final point. If a drill hole were put down starting at river level, the drilling would go through 700 metres — yes, 700 metres — of shale, sandstone, limestone, even some Cambrian sandstone, below which is granite. Do you think that fellow gave any thought to the granite in his determination of the age of the earth? Just a few thousand years? I think it is much more logical to conclude that the formation of the rocks in the Niagara gorge area took a lot longer than that. I will be glad to give you a table showing specific dates.

Mother, the next time one of these young-earthers comes around, remember your son, the geologist, who has looked at rocks across Canada and elsewhere in the world. Believe me, Mother, the earth is very old!

Love you as always,

Gordon

C. Gordon Winder is professor (emeritus) of geology at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ont.

Thoughts on 'Creation-Science' report

...continued from page 12.

requirement for the material reality of our flesh and bones" (*The Fourth Day*, 256). This idea has been expressed more explicitly: "...Maybe God formed Adam by enabling a more primitive mother to give birth to an offspring who possessed the image of God" (Committee Report, Board of Trustees, p. 2).

Pastoral Advice

These are matters of great urgency. They are potentially very divisive. Report 28 therefore recommends that synod adopt "the following points of pastoral advice to give guidance in shaping the continuation of the discussion." Note the following somewhat abbreviated pointers:

1. *On "sensitive issues of faith and learning" scholars are urged "to first submit their ideas to peer review..."* 2. *They are further urged "in their speaking and writing to exercise prudence..."* 3. *Moreover, "the church urges its scholars, including theologians and natural scientists, to exercise an appropriate critical restraint with respect to 'the assured results' of their investigations and the 'clear consensus' of their disciplines, mindful that interpretations of Scripture as well as theories of reality are ever in need of reformation (*semper reformanda*)."*

Scholars among us are inclined at times to make strident claims for their views with strong appeals to the alleged consensus of the scientific community. For example: "I am convinced..." (*ibid.*, 73, 209, 237), "I believe sincerely..." (*ibid.*, 210), "There is not the slightest doubt in my mind..." (*ibid.*, 265), "Neither is there any doubt in my mind..." (*ibid.*, 265), "I firmly believe..." (*ibid.*, 85), "I remain convinced..." (*ibid.*, 208). A goodly dose of humility and tentativity, seasoned with "an appropriate critical restraint," becomes us all.

4. *"The church reminds its members of the validity of the scientific enterprise as a way of carrying out the cultural mandate."* 5. *"The church encourages institutions of higher learning to provide forums for scholars from various disciplines to interact on critical questions concerning origins and thus assist the church in achieving greater clarity on these matters."* 6. *And, last, but not least, "the church reminds its members to be careful not to allow disputes over the origins of creation, however important they are, to diminish or obscure our calling as stewards of creation."*

A good note on which to close.

Gordon Spykman is Professor of Religion and Theology at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Science

The 'big bang' — or is it the 'big poof'?

Daniel Lazich

November 18, 1989. As dawn tracked the retreating night over the horizon at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Lompoc, California, the launch sequence clock for the Delta rocket ticked toward zero. "All systems go," announced the impersonal voice of launch control. Powerful engines roared to life, and the rocket, poised on a column of smoke and fire, accelerated toward the South Pole. On board was the cosmic background explorer (COBE), designed to help unravel a scientific puzzle with theological ramifications. Its mission: To find evidence that would validate the big bang theory.

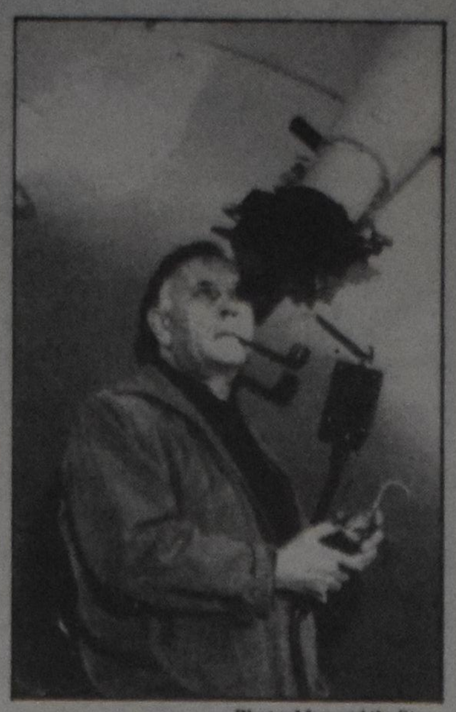


Photo: Man and the Star

Edwin Hubble at the 48-inch telescope

In 1929 Edwin P. Hubble (of Hubble Space Telescope fame) observed that the universe is constantly expanding. This discovery stimulated development of the first comprehensive theory about the origin of the universe. If the universe is expanding, reasoned scientists, at some point in the past it must have been very small and extremely hot and dense. According to this theory, the explosion ("big bang") of this matter filled space with particles from which, under the influence of gravity, galaxies, stars and planets were eventually born.

If it is to be accepted as valid, any scientific theory must make a verifiable prediction. The big bang theory made two predictions verifiable or refutable by observation: If the big bang had occurred, (1) the explosion of primordial matter would leave an echo in the form of microwave and infrared radiation (detectable at about three degrees above absolute zero) having the same intensity in all directions; (2) the galaxies resulting from the hot soup of particles would be uniformly distributed throughout the universe. COBE's instruments, 100 times more sensitive and precise than those on the ground, were designed to test the theory.

The Delta Launch was only the first phase of the most extensive and expensive study of the universe ever undertaken. Soon to join COBE and the Hubble Space Telescope are gamma ray, X-ray, and ultraviolet telescopes. A superconducting supercollider is under construction. All are part of a $10 billion, 10-year project to further science's search for answers to the question "in the beginning, what?"

Elated scientists breathed a sigh of relief as the COBE instrumentation moved into position to begin its mission. Would it contribute to understanding scientific and theological questions that have obsessed humankind through the centuries? — Is our universe the product of intelligent design? Did the universe originate from pre-existing matter, or did it come into being out of absolutely nothing? How could the observed universe originate out of nothing and be what we observe today?

Over the past few years some scientists have become convinced that further advances in our knowledge about the universe cannot be realized without serious consideration of areas hitherto considered exclusive to theologians. Advances in quantum cosmology and high-energy physics have cast serious doubt on the validity of scientific theories of the origin of the universe that posit no Creator.

Would COBE add weight to the sorely troubled big bang theory, as scientists hoped? Or would it point humankind to something, perhaps Someone, predating that theorized beginning of the universe? So intense was worldwide interest in COBE's observations that the American Astronomical Society (AAS) announced the probe's findings would be revealed at its January 1990 meeting in Arlington, Virginia. The meeting, unsurprisingly, turned out the largest gathering of scientists in the history of the AAS. The world's most prominent cosmologists and theorists came. Would they be attending a resurrection of the problem-plagued, if not moribund, big bang? Or a wake?

Wrong assumptions

The big bang theory seemed in good health in 1965 when two Bell Laboratory scientists discovered the predicted background radiation. Cosmologists worldwide, convinced they had found the ultimate answer to the riddle of creation, hailed this "undeniable confirmation." But problems began soon after with the advent of supercomputers.

These ultrafast masters of the mathematical allowed scientists to model the big bang theory. Simulation was expected to show how large-scale structures evolved from a super-dense primordial fireball. To the researchers' consternation, the model showed that if the universe began as the big bang theory claims, the large structures — clumps of galaxies, island universes — actually present could not have developed. Furthermore, the mathematical model showed that the big bang's universe should be approximately 7.6 billion years old — insufficient time for gravity alone to construct the observed universe. Apparently some other force, unknown to scientists, must have been involved in its birth.

Discovery of a "hole in space" by Harvard University astronomers in 1981 did nothing to improve the status of the big bang. The hole, 100 million light-years wide, showed that, contrary to the big bang's hypothesis, matter is not evenly distributed in space on a large scale. Then, in 1989, several teams of astronomers reported unexpectedly large structures with enormous voids between them. Astronomers at the Howard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics discovered a gigantic wall estimated to be 500 million light-years across and 15 million light-years thick. Comprising clusters of galaxies, the wall is too large to be formed by the gravitational clumping of particles that the big bang postulates were evenly distributed throughout the universe.

"To the researchers' consternation, the model showed that if the universe began as the big bang theory claims, the large structures — clumps of galaxies, island universes — actually present could not have developed."

To account for this new information, cosmologists revised their theory: significant lumpiness should have been present in the early universe, they said, to have caused clumping of particles, thus enabling gravity to construct galaxies. If it existed, this lumpiness should have left an imprint in the form of peaks in the background radiation. To resolve the dilemma, scientists commissioned an extensive study of the large-scale structures in the universe. One function of COBE was to search for peaks in the background radiation.

One can imagine, then, why the world's leading scientists came to the AAS meeting in Arlington. Supercomputer models, a hole in space, a great wall of galaxies — only COBE's instrumentation could cure the scientific headaches brought on by a failing big bang theory. Or, it could bring added headaches....

It did. Initial COBE findings show the early universe to have been very smooth; scientists working with COBE instruments at several wavelengths of microwave and infrared radiation reported no sign of the turbulence necessary for formation of the large structures in the big bang universe. Nor did COBE point to a model for reconciling the predictions of any version of the big bang with the reality of the observed universe.

The scientists were stunned. George F. Smoot, leader of the U.C. Berkeley team mapping the smoothness of radiation, reportedly remarked that scientists may have to go to the tooth fairies to help them explain what they had observed.

John C. Mather of the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, confessed, "I am completely mystified how the present-day structure [of the universe] has come to exist without having left some trace at the level of sensitivity that we know we have with our apparatus. There should have been some kind of energy release [after the big bang]. But there isn't anything there."

Reporting on the AAS meeting, Jay Malin concluded: "The difference between the smooth echoes and present-day structures is what stumped the astronomers. The lifetime of the universe is not long enough for gravity alone to be responsible for matter having clumped together out of an evenly mixed universe — some other major event or process has to be responsible."

Just what the "other process" is eludes scientific inquiry.

Dr. Robert K. Adair, associate director of the Brookhaven National Laboratory, suggested that the study of the elements constituting the universe would lead to understanding the "Grand Plan of the Master Architect." Other scientists are reluctantly suggesting that a force external to our universe is responsible for selection of the initial conditions.

Many cosmologists are no longer convinced that we live in a universe constructed from pre-existing matter. Some are beginning to realize and even to admit that cosmological research points to consideration of creation from nothing, *ex nihilo*, a universe created by the fiat of an intelligent designer. Certainly, if we could view the universe from the outside, a growing number of scientists would not be surprised to find imprinted on its surface "Made by God."

Daniel Lazich, an aerospace engineer, has studied the relation of physics to theology for many years. He is the principal engineer of the kinetic energy weapons project of the United States Strategic Defense Command. This article is used with his permission. It appeared in the Jan./Feb. 1991 issue of Liberty.

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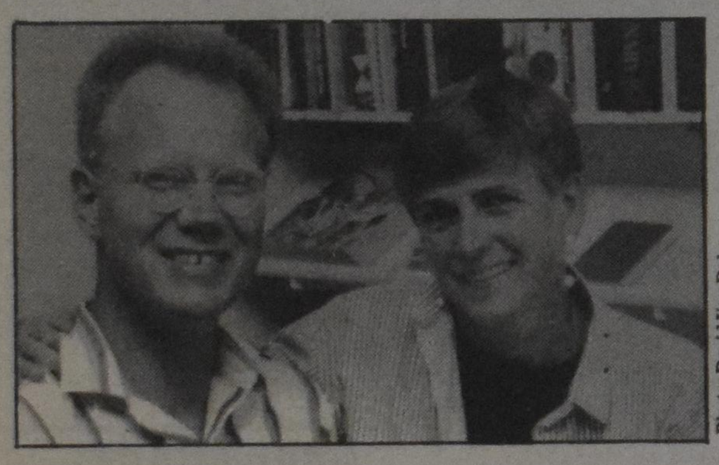


Photo: David Van Dyke

Peter and Marja are IN

Dear P & M:

Hi. I'm a university student studying in Toronto. Just recently I met a group of Christian students from the Church of Christ. They said that you have to be baptized fully submerged in water to be saved. They base this on 1 Peter 3:21 which says, "And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also — not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

I always believed that we were saved by grace because Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins. Therefore, if we accept him into our hearts we will receive everlasting life. I also thought baptism was more a symbol than anything else. Now I'm confused.

Dear Confused at University:

1 Peter 3:21 is not a proof text for baptism by immersion. It's part of a reassuring chapter about God's grace which will carry us through a time of suffering for doing what is right. Peter uses the water of baptism as a metaphor for the water that carried Noah and his family. As you know, the flood waters saved Noah by floating, not submerging, the ark.

Peter himself uses the word "symbolize" to let us know that he is speaking figuratively. This verse points us to the *meaning* of baptism, regardless of the *method* used. Baptism by immersion or sprinkling is meaningful only in so far as it celebrates the resurrecting power of Jesus Christ!

We encourage you to hold on to what you've always believed. Don't be easily threatened by different positions held by Christians from other denominations.

This is as good a time as any to realize that brothers and sisters in Christ can hold some differing understandings of some parts of Scripture and still belong to the same family of God. We can listen and learn, but there's no need to get rattled or confused.

Perhaps you've never had to deal with these kinds of issues before. Ironically, you probably expected to be threatened by secular thinking at university; instead, you were shaken by a challenge from a Christian corner. Look at it positively. You know your Bible better now. You've had to examine and defend what you've always just assumed. There's nothing wrong with that! In this very same chapter, Peter tells us to "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (verse 15). You are now better able to do that.

One bit of advice. Be on guard whenever people suggest that you're only saved if you do things or interpret the Bible exactly their way.

Dear P & M:

My husband and I recently had a baby boy whom we had circumcised. Afterwards, considering the discomfort our little fellow was in, I thought a little bit harder about our decision. Now I wonder if the Christian Reformed Church synod has made any stand on this issue or whether there is any biblical justification for circumcision. Or is it simply a medical option? I would like to know what the Christian community thinks of this issue.

Dear Young Mom:

Circumcision was an Old Testament sign of the covenant. It was completely replaced by baptism and Paul had very harsh words for those who tried to have non-Jewish Christians circumcised, calling them "mutilators of the flesh" (Phil. 3:2).

Today, only Jews have theological and cultural reasons for circumcising their baby boys. For everyone else it is totally elective surgery done for cosmetic reasons. There is no real medical or hygienic need to have it done. Circumcision is performed later in a man's life if his foreskin does not pull back comfortably, but this is an infrequent problem. Meanwhile, most doctors hate doing it because the procedure is unnecessary and the remuneration is lousy. Consequently most newborns are no longer automatically circumcised.

The pressure for circumcision tends to come from the father, not the mother. If Dad is circumcised, he often feels strongly that his son should be, too.

The other pressure source is the anticipated social stigma on uncircumcised teens in a locker room setting. Even in this area, kids can be ridiculed for differences in appearance. But this will change as attitudes about circumcision continue to change.

Don't think that you've harmed your son in any way. You haven't! Still, your misgivings are valid and will help expectant parents rethink their position on this issue.

Write to: P & M
c/o Calvinist Contact
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam Da Silva, Ineke Brouwer-Parlevliet, Tom Zeyl, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

Thanks

FLUIT:

Klaas and Geertje Fluit are very thankful to the Lord for giving them such a wonderful 50th wedding anniversary celebration with their children and grandchildren, family and friends. Thank you for all your prayers, presents and cards.

VREUGDENHIL:

Our heartfelt thanks to all our friends and relatives who so faithfully supported us with their prayers, cards, flowers, and other tokens of care during Nick's illness and our bereavement. Your love and care made our burden lighter and we have truly experienced God's love through you.

Marg, Martin, Peggy, and David.

Births

DROST:

"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14).

Bram and Jennifer (nee Bill) rejoice with the arrival of

PHILIP JACOB

who was born April 28, 1991, weighing 9 lbs. 14 oz.

He is proudly welcomed by big sister Alanna, and by his grandparents Peter and Sharon Drost of Tillsonburg, Ont., Louis and Martha Bill of Jarvis, Ont., and by great-grandparents John and Patricia Hogeterp of Townsend, Ont.

Home address: 304 Otto St., Thunder Bay, ON P7A 2T9

Marriages

DE BOER—VANDERKLOET:

With joy and thanksgiving, Cornelis and Martha de Boer of Clinton, Ont., and Ed & Truus Vanderkloet of Rexdale, Ont., announce the forthcoming marriage of their children,

CATHERINE CLARA
and
EDWARD JOHN

on Saturday, June 1, 1991, D.V. Ceremony to take place in Keffer Memorial Chapel, Waterloo, Ont., at 4 p.m.

Catherine and Edward will make their home at: 545 Belmont Ave., W., Kitchener, ON N2M 5G7

ELZINGA-FLOKSTRA:

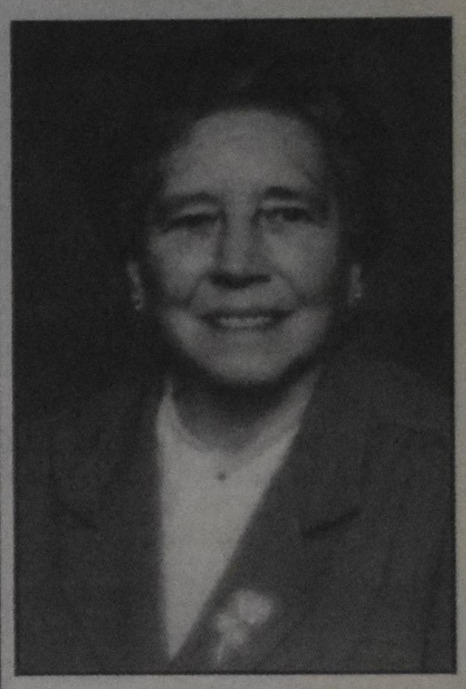
John and Joan Elzinga share the joy of the forthcoming marriage of their daughter,

MELANIE ANNE
to
STEVEN

son of Casey and Maryke Flokstra on Saturday, June 8, 1991, D.V., at 2 p.m. Mount Hamilton Chr. Ref. Church of Hamilton, Ont.

Future address: F6-500 Stonechurch Rd., W., Hamilton ON L9B 1R2

Birthday



Congratulations to Anne Nieboer (nee Gritter) on the occasion of her 80th birthday!

NIEBOER:

We gratefully acknowledge God's faithfulness on the 80th birthday of our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother,

ANNE NIEBOER
(nee Gritter)

on June 1, 1991.

We pray that God will continue to bless you and keep you in his loving care. Love from your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren:

Henry & Shirley Nieboer — Glanworth
Evert & Hilda Nieboer — Dundas
Cora & Ralph Fledderus — London
Jane & Henry Brouwer — Hamilton
Ineke & John Bouwers — Welland
Lynn & Peter Dam — Beamsville
Wenda & George Gerryts — Wellandport
Harry & Sylvia Nieboer — Hamilton
Albert & Roxanne Nieboer — Bradford

34 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren.

Home address: Wellingstone Chr. Home, 102-1415 Upper Wellington, Hamilton, ON L9A 5E8

Marriages

NOORDHOF-GRIFT:

With joy and thanksgiving to God, Luke and Elsie Noordhof of Strathroy and Richard and Joanne Grift of New Dundee are happy to announce the forthcoming marriage of their children,

MARGARET ANN
and
RICHARD EVERT

The celebration of love for each other and their God will take place, the Lord willing, at 11 a.m. on Saturday, June 8, 1991, in First Chr. Ref. Church, Kitchener, Ont., Rev. J. Kuntz and Seminarian J. Noordhof officiating.

Future address: 38 Fairholt Rd. S., Hamilton, ON L8M 2T4

SCHOLZ-SNELTJES:

Giving thanks to God, Guenther and Elisabeth Scholz of Roblin, Ont., and Henry and Lena Sneltjes of Cherry Valley, Ont., would like to share the joyous news that their children,

PATRICIA
and
RON

will be united in marriage on June 8, 1991, at 2:00 p.m. in the Second Chr. Ref. Church of Brampton, Ont.

Future address: R.R. #2, Norval, ON L0P 1K0

Marriages continued...

Classified

Marriages

STREEFKERK-SWIERENGA:
With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord, Mr. and Mrs. John Streefkerk are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter,

MARJORIE FLORENCE
to
JONATHAN PETER

son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Swierenga of Grand Rapids, Mich.
The celebration will take place, D.V., on Saturday, June 1, 1991, at 10:30 a.m. in the Orangeville Chr. Ref. Church, Orangeville, Ont., Rev. J.J. Hoytema officiating.
Future address: 71 Victoria Dr., North Fort Myers, Florida, U.S.A. 33903

VANDERSTOEP-KLUNDER:
Mr. and Mrs. John Vanderstoep and Mr. and Mrs. Ken Klunder are happy to announce the wedding of their children,

BELINDA
and
DEREK

This celebration of love, the Lord willing, will be on Saturday, June 1, 1991, at 3:00 p.m. in the Fruitland Chr. Ref. Church, Fruitland, Ont., Rev. G. Veeneman officiating.

Anniversaries

St. Anna Parochie (Fr.) Renfrew (Ont.)
1946 May 16 1991
"The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore" (Ps. 121:8).
We give praise and thanks to God for giving us our parents and being able to celebrate with them their 45th wedding anniversary.

WILLIAM and FEIKJE BEIMERS
(nee Vander Ploeg)

It is our prayer that the Lord may continue to bless and keep them in his care through the years to come.
With love and congratulations from their children:
John & Rita Beimers — Shawville, Que.
Jamie, Scott, Christopher
Wesley & Margaret Beimers — Arnprior
William, Andrew, Leanne
Garry & Cathy Beimers — Renfrew
Matthew, Bradley
Betty & Henry Schuler — Renfrew
Jason, Stephen, Phillip, Sarah
Jim & Valerie Beimers — Renfrew
Kristen, Trevor
Henrietta Beimers — Smiths Falls
Ray Beimers — at home
To celebrate this special occasion you are invited to an "open house" that will be held on Saturday, May 25, 1991, D.V., from 2-4 p.m. and from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. at Hebron Chr. Ref. Church, Fellowship Hall, Albert St., Renfrew, Ont.
Home address: R.R. #5, Renfrew, ON K7V 3Z8

1936 May 27 1991
With praise and thanksgiving, we joyfully announce the 55th wedding anniversary of our parents,

JOHAN (John) and JANNA DULLEMOND
(nee Alblas)

It is our prayer that the Lord may bless you for many more years.
Congratulations from:
Connie & Ralph Dekleine
Peter Dullemond
Case & Ruth Dullemond
Joe & Mary Dullemond
Audrey & Gerben Gazendam
13 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.
Home address: R.R. #1, 6605 Franktown Rd., Richmond, ON K0A 2Z0

Anniversaries

Hoogkerk, Gr. Dundas, Ont.
1946 May 20 1991
We joyfully announce the 45th wedding anniversary of:

FRED and DOROTHY BOONSTRA

Their wedding text was Exodus 14:14, 15. We thank the Lord and praise him for this celebration. We pray the Lord will continue to bless Dad and Mom. We ask him to keep them, and be gracious to them.
With much love from your children and grandchildren:
Harriet & Ross James — Australia
Matthew, Paul, Brendan
Margaret & Joe DeWeerd — Waterdown
Bryan & Geri, Cynthia, Wayne
Wilma & Ed Gringhuis — Dundas
Scott, Kimberley, Amy, Gwendolyn
Kerry & Wilma Boonstra — Burlington
Annette, Karen, Fred
Jenny & Stan Jaskot — Ancaster
Angela, Shauna, Mitchell
Wally & Irene Boonstra — Waterdown
John, Stephanie, Kristen
Dorothy & Brian Trebych — Hamilton
Gregory, Kevin
Home address: R.R. #2, Dundas, ON L9H 5E2

Scheveningen Brantford
1941 May 28 1991
With thankfulness to God, we wish to announce the golden wedding anniversary of our beloved parents and grandparents,

DOMINICUS and WILHELMINA BRUYN
(nee de Reus)

Congratulations with love and best wishes from your family:
Domi, Lora, Jenny — St. Clements
Eleanor, Al, Scott, Cindy, Susan — Brantford
George, Maria, Jennifer - St. Clements
Reg, Brenda, Matthew, Melissa, Mark — Waterford
Ron, Rhonda, Jesse — Wilsonville
"...I pray Thee...show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight. ... And he said, 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest' " (Ex. 33:13, 14).
Home address: R.R. #4, Brantford, ON N3T 5L7

Weston St. Catharines
1966 May 27 1991
With joy and praise to God, we as children are thankful for the 25 years of marriage God has given to our mom and dad,

BILL and MARY KNIGHT (Knegt)
(nee Maas)

We are thankful to our heavenly Father for giving us God-fearing parents and for the Christian love and instruction we have received from them. It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless them and keep them together in his care.
With love from your family:
Marlene & Stan Langendoen
Teresa & Rod Kok (boyfriend)
Eric
Brian
Home address: 29 Lakebreeze Cres., St. Catharines, ON L2M 7C3

Vacation

Two bedroom furnished apartment for rent, above garage, in the Hamilton area. Available by the week. Please call (416) 628-8507.

WASAGA BEACH
Still looking for a great holiday? Come to **Alton Lodges** and enjoy our nine miles of sandy beach. Safe swimming for everyone. One- and two-bedroom housekeeping cottages. Give us a call at (705) 429-2420. Your hosts: Len and Rita Bette, Alton Lodges, R.R. #1, Site 130, Box 8, Wasaga Beach, ON L0L 2P0.

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Arthur and Minnie Vandervliet (nee Kingma) on their 45th wedding anniversary!

1946 June 7 1991
Hippolytushoef Dunnville
Wieringen, the Neth. Ont., Canada
"Happy is he, whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God" (Ps. 146:5).
With thankfulness to God for his blessing, we hope to celebrate the 45th anniversary of our parents and grandparents:

ARTHUR and MINNIE VANDERVLIET
(nee Kingma)

With love from the family:
Mark & Elly — Renton
Andy & Marion — St. Catharines
Albert & Rita — Dunnville
John & Jennefer — Dunnville
Janet & Ed Mazur — Dunnville
Lawrence & Jane — Toronto
Bonnie & Dick Baarda — Smithville
Reynold & Wendy — Smithville
Henry — at home
and 21 grandchildren.
Relatives and friends are invited to an open house at the Bethel Chr. Ref. Church, Robinson Rd., Dunnville, Ont., from 2 to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 8, 1991.
Home address: 419 Helena St., Dunnville, ON N1A 2T1

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! We are thankful to the Lord for caring for our parents as they celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary, D.V., on May 23, 1991.

BILL and TRIENTJE WESTERHOF
(nee Hovius)

With love from us all:
Jenny & Darryl
Jeany & Kees
John & Sandi
Martha & Larry
Evelyn & John
Teresa & Gordon
Brenda & Randy
and grandchildren.
Home address: 12451 203 Street, Maple Ridge, BC V2X 4W3

Personal

Christian professional businessman, age 32, would like to meet a sincere, attractive, outgoing Christian lady for friendship. Please call Tony at 1-(416) 858-2854. Will accept all collect calls.

Anniversaries

1961 May 27 1991
"Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, the Lord reigns!" (1 Chr. 16:31).
It is with thanks to our Lord who reigns, that we the children of

NICOLAAS and MARIA SCHAAFSMA
(nee Spierenburg)

joyfully announce the 30th wedding anniversary of our parents on Monday, May 27, 1991.
It is our prayer that God will continue to bless them and keep them in his care.
With love and congratulations from your children,
Michael Schaafsma — Orangeville, Ont.
Mark & Tina Schaafsma — Acton, Ont.
Home address: R.R. #1, Shelburne, ON L0N 1S0

For Sale

Used Gestetner available. Good working condition. Stencils included. Make us an offer. Call (519) 453-6565 Tuesdays or Fridays between 9:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Cornelis and Nellie Van Dyk-Den Arend on their 60th wedding anniversary!

Pernis 1931 Shalom Manor 1991
"I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever, for great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depth of the grave" (Ps. 86:12, 13).
On May 27, 1991, our much loved parents,

CORNELIS and NELLIE VAN DYK-DEN AREND

will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary. And though this is a day of celebration, joy and thanksgiving, it is also a day filled with a sense of sadness since Mom no longer realizes the significance of this day. May the Lord Jesus be with you both, Dad, and give you patience and peace.
Your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren:
Gary & Adrie Van Dyk — St. Catharines, Ont.
Lina & Tom Zylstra — Glen Morris, Ont.
Harry & Nienke Van Dyk — Hamilton, Ont.
Joan & Homer Bruinsma — St. Catharines, Ont.
John & Audrey Van Dyk — Kitchener, Ont.
Charles Van Dyk — Kitchener, Ont.
Gerard & Nellie Van Dyk — Cambridge, Ont.
Mailing address: Mr. & Mrs. C. Van Dyk, Shalom Manor, 12 Bartlett Ave., Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5

Obituaries

On May 13, 1991, at God's appointed time, he took home his child

PETRONELLA JEANETTE KLOET-SCHERFF

at the age of 84 years. We praise and thank our faithful God and Father for his comfort and loving care.
Psalm 121
Her husband, Jacobus Dirk, preceded her on Jan. 6, 1976, and her son Dirk Cornelius on March 1, 1970.
Mother of:
Martin & Marilyn Kloet
Ann & Fred Schuringa
John & Trudy Kloet
Leni & Harry Blyleven
Adrian & Ann Kloet
Hans & Teena Kloet
Peter & Rita Kloet
George & Ada Kloet
32 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.
Correspondence address: 3 Kelly Ave., Simcoe, ON N3Y 4V6

Real Estate

Trailer park, 100-site, 30 acres, 10 miles to church and school. For more information, call (416) 986-4515.

Classified

Accommodations

BED & BREAKFAST
Beautiful Niagara Falls
A pleasant 15 min. walk to the Falls. Friendly home, nice rooms. Superb breakfast. Dutch spoken.
Mike & Joan Havinga
(416) 358-3534

Bed and Breakfast
Come back to the Netherlands! Stay close to the city of Utrecht. F. 175.00 per person per week. For info. contact: Mvr. Sneller, Pr. Irene Laan, 53, Utrecht, the Neth. Tel. 011-31-304-43509.

Summer Job Market

Acton, Ont.: Experience in sales of masonry products. Third year marketing student. 21-years old. Would like to work in sales field, but will take anything for the summer. Call: Anthony Looyenga at (519) 853-0758.

Bowmanville, Ont.: Athletic, country girl going into Grade 11. Has experience on apple, sheep and fruit & veg. farms. Wouldn't mind trying some sort of camp-counselling, assistant counselling, etc. But willing to do almost *anything!* Contact: Gena Jaspers-Fayer, R.R #4 (3326) Bragg Rd., Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K5 (416) 623-2634.

Bowmanville, Ont.: 16-year-old, Grade 11 male looking for work in farming or construction during the summer months. Have experience in bricklaying (labourer) and farmwork. Also have driver's licence. Richard Wessels, R.R. #4, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K5. Phone: (416) 623-8521.

CLINTON, Ont.: 18 year old student at LDCSS (graduating this June). I have experience in dairy, poultry (egg), and other odds and ends jobs (eg.: bailing, mowing grass, etc.). I would prefer to work on a **poultry farm,** but am willing to try pretty well anything. Since you're near the phone, why not just give me a call at 1-(519) 482-5852, ask for John.

Grimsby, Ont.: DORDT COLLEGE student (3rd year **English major, journalism**) is looking for a job during the summer months. Many years of experience in greenhouse and nursery work, but prefers study related work. Dirk B. Schouten (416) 945-5335.

GUELPH, Ont.: Looking for work in **construction,** but willing to do **other work.** Experience in framing, social work, greenhouse and machine shop work. Call Brent at (519) 836-3298.

INDIAN RIVER, Ont.: I am a university student looking for summer employment in **office work, baby-sitting,** or **housework.** If you have any work for me, please call Angela at (705) 295-6942.

Lucknow, Ont.: I have exper[illegible]e on a dairy farm, wou[illegible]: on a dairy [illegible] Alex Harte[illegible], R.R. #5, [illegible], N0G 2H0. Phone: ([illegible]-5227.

GOT A JOB

PETERBOROUGH, Ont.: Hi, I'm 17 years old and attend Quinte Christian High School. I would like to use my summer to broaden my work experience (anywhere in Ontario), which already includes dairy farming, babysitting, camp kitchen, and nursing home. My social activities include Young People's and 4-H. For enthusiastic help call Janice at (705) 696-2169.

Summer Job Market

LINDSAY, Ont.: 20-year-old male university student would like summer work as a **lifeguard** and/or **swim instructor** (all levels). My qualifications include many RLS SC levels such as instructor, lifesaver, boat rescue, water-safety instructor and bronze bar. I have three years experience, am available May 1, and you can contact me, Claude, at (705) 328-0608.

MORRISBURG, Ont.: Reformed Bible College student (3rd year). I am working towards my Bachelor of Religious Education in Missions degree with a minor in social work. I am looking for a job for the summer months which is **social work** related. Amy Van Veen, R.R. #1, Morrisburg, ON K0C 1X0; Phone: (613) 543-2097.

ST. CATHARINES, Ont.: McMaster student is eager to find summer employment. Prefer **office work** (computer, etc.) but I'm open to doing other things as well. Call Dave at (416) 935-4026.

TORONTO, Ont.: Second-year female Redeemer student, 19 years old, seeks employment in Toronto area. Experienced with young children and infants, minor cooking, housekeeping and gardening, but eager and willing to learn new skills. Call Liesje at (416) 648-2131, ext. 320, or, after April 26, at (416) 223-8380.

VANCOUVER: B.C.: I am a 24 year old social work student (3rd year) seeking employment in the **social services** in the Greater Vancouver area. I have experience working with the mentally disabled, elderly and troubled youth. Call Mary-Anne at (604) 434-8776.

WATERLOO, Ont.: 20-year-old Guelph University student (English, second year) seeks summer job in the **Kitchener/ Waterloo** or **Toronto** area. Would like to work in study-related field but is willing to do just about anything. Has experience as camp counsellor, swimming instructor and caring for children. Call Trixie at (519) 725-4581.

For Rent

Mississauga - Rooms for rent in furnished home. Full use of all amenities. Suitable for single young person. $350 plus utilities. Contact Norm at (416) 567-7857.

Anyone interested in a **country holiday?** We have a one-bedroom apartment available either weekly or monthly. Acton area. (519) 853-2358.

Teachers

BRAMPTON, Ont.: John Knox Chr. School seeks applications for the position in the **Junior Grades** for the 1991/92 school year. **French** and **Music** an asset. All interested in applying, please forward application and resume to: Mr. I. Witteveen, Principal, John Knox Chr. School, 82 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6Y 2C7. Phone: (416) 451-3236

GEORGETOWN, Ont.: Georgetown District Chr. School. Because of increased enrolment in Kindergarten, we have a possible opening for a 60 per cent teacher-aid with E.C.E. training. For information or application please contact Treena Sybersma, Principal, R.R. #1, Georgetown, ON L7G 4S4 or phone: (416) 877-4221.

Teachers

HOUSTON, B.C.: Houston Christian School, located in the beautiful Bulkley Valley of north central B.C. has 3 **Elementary** teaching positions open. Please address all inquiries to Mr. Doyle Smiens, Principal, Box 237, Houston, B.C. Phone (604) 845-7736.

MEDICINE HAT, Alta.: Medicine Hat Christian School invites applications for a **Grade 2,** as well as an **E.C.S. (Early Childhood Services)** position for the 1991/92 school year. Qualifications in music will be an asset. Medicine Hat Chr. School is an interdenominational school and has an enrolment of 140 students from E.C.S. to Grade 9. Please submit application and resume to Mr. Wm. Slofstra, Principal, Medicine Hat Chr. School, 68 Rice Dr. S.E., Medicine Hat, AB T1B 3X2. Phone: school (403) 526-3246; home (403) 526-7192.

TERRACE, B.C.: Centennial Christian School is accepting applications for a **Kindergarten** position for the 1991-92 school year. Direct inquiries to: Mr. Frank Voogd, 3608 Sparks St., Terrace, BC V8G 2A5; Phone: (604) 635-6173

WOODBRIDGE, Ont.: Toronto District Chr. High School invites applications for a teaching position in **Music.** Please forward resumes to the principal at the school, 377 Woodbridge Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8

Help Wanted

Help wanted to assist in **domestic duties** and to be trained to **manage 22-room motel** when owners are absent. Live-in accommodations provided. Phone: (416) 732-2159

Miscellaneous

Want to rent a car while in Holland?

Ltd AutoRent

Jan Kalma has the key to all forms of car rentals.

Will deliver car to Amsterdam airport if desired.

jan kalma

De Meer 24, 9201 EZ Drachten
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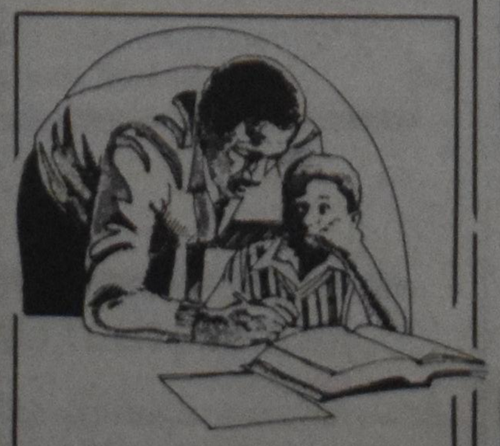
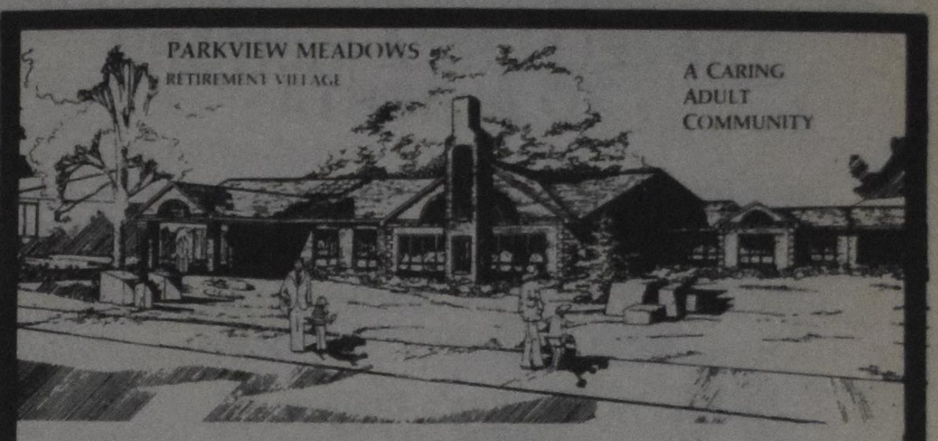
Fax (31) 5120-32324



Check out our classifieds for possible teaching positions.

Accommodations



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- Monthly Rental
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Now's the time to make your selection for immediate occupancy! Let us explain the choices available to you or your loved ones... **SATURDAYS 1:00 - 4:00**

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For information call: **(416) 768-5239** or **(519) 587-5696**
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For sale
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Printed in the year 1662. Written in "Hoch Deutsch." Old and New Testament maps. Includes the apocrypha. Write or phone:
Mr. & Mrs. Peter De Vries
3050 Glencrest Rd., Apt. 1001
Burlington, On L7N 2H3
Phone: (416) 634-8951

Help Wanted

SEEKING A PASTOR

The **Christian Reformed Church** of **St. Albert, Alta.,** a congregation of 60 families, will be vacant at the end of June 1991. We are seeking a **new pastor** to lead us in worship and congregational life. A church profile is available upon request.

For information contact:

Bud Brink (403) 458-3091, or

Albert Stol
57 Springfield Cr.
St. Albert, AB T8N 0J9
Phone: (403) 458-6578

PART-TIME YOUTH WORKER

is being sought by the **Delta First Ladner CRC.** Delta is a rapidly expanding suburb of Vancouver, B.C. Church profiles and further information on this exciting/challenging new position available. Enquiries/resumes should be directed to:

John Bandstra (604) 946-6231

Classified/Events

Vacation	Vacation	Events	Events	Miscellaneous

TRAVELLERS & VISITORS TO ALBERTA

The King's College Residence has furnished 1 & 2-bedroom suites available May thru mid-August. Suites include appliances and kitchen facilities. Very reasonable rates for daily, weekly or monthly rental. Advance reservations required. Contact:

The King's College
10766 - 97 St.
Edmonton, AB T5H 2M1
Telephone (403) 428-0727

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Phone: (416) 352-2308
Fax: (416) 352-2308

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Plan a successful vacation at our resort known for its Dutch hospitality. Reasonable rates for cottage rentals. Excellent for camping, swimming and fishing (ideal for group camping). "Little Europe" is located 10 km. east of Hwy. 11, on Hwy. 118, past the Muskoka Airport.

• No pets please • Showers available

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Miscellaneous

ATTENTION:

If you are considering sending us an ad via fax, please be sure to:

1. send printed or typed copy
2. include billing address
3. include contact person with phone number

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Write: Christian Reformed Church Extension Fund
45 Harriet St., Toronto, ON M4L 2G1

Hamilton Holland Festival 91
June 9-16

The following events are scheduled during THE HAMILTON HOLLAND FESTIVAL '91

SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 1991
All day: **Hamilton Holland Festival** participates in Burlington's first annual multi-cultural day. Performances by Dutch groups. **Hamilton / Burlington Dutch Language Classes** Children's Festival at Spencer Smith Park. (11 a.m) *Evening:* **Brabantse Avond,** Hamilton Germania Hall (7 p.m.)

MONDAY, JUNE 10, 1991
All day: **KLM** Dutch-Canadian Open Golf Championships. Kings Forest Golf Course (incl. lunch and dinner) *All day:* **Downtown B.I.A.** Dutch Village Market at Gore Park. Crafts and daily entertainment. (Monday-Saturday, regular shopping hours) *Evening:* Start **Netherlands Board of Tourism** Avondvierdaagse, Four-day Evening Walk, Royal Botanical Gardens. (Monday - Thursday - start between 5:30 and 7 p.m.)

TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 1991
Evening: **Dutch Film Festival,** Broadway Cinema "Vincent and Theo" (7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 1991
All day::**Royal Botanical Gardens 50th Anniversary** Van Gogh Exhibition (until June 20th., 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. daily) and **Dutch Literature Day** with several authors in attendance. (10 a.m. - 5 p.m.) plus Amstel Brewery Courtyard Café.

THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 1991
All day: **D.C.C.O.O.** Dutch-Canadian Cutural Organization of Ontario - Conference, Hamilton Convention Centre. (8:30 a.m.) *Evening:* **Woodstock Dutch Language Theatre "n Wespennest".** Hamilton Place Studio Theatre (8:30 p.m.) with Dutch Literature Display.

FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 1991
All day: **Martinair Holland/Club The Netherlands** North American Klaverjas Championships "Amsterdams" and "Rotterdams". Germania Hall. *Evening:* **Martinair Holland/CNBPA** An evening with Gerard Cox. Black tie/business suit - dinner at the Hamilton Convention Centre (6 p.m.) and Gerard Cox Show at the Hamilton Place Studio Theatre (8:30 p.m.) *Evening:* **Martinair Holland/Club Harten Troef,** Rikken Tournament. Germania Hall (7 p.m.) *Evening:* **Dutch Film Festival** , Broadway Cinema "The Vanishing" (Spoorloos) 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 1991
Afternoon: **KLM Soccer Cup** Dutch Old Internationals against Hamilton All-Stars, Brian Timmis Stadium (halftime show: **HEINEKEN** Dash: 50 Meter Race on wooden shoes. (Guinness World Record attempt) with Dutch music, Food and **AMSTEL** "Bruin Cafe". (Festivities start at noon, game starts at 2 p.m.) *Evening:* **De Nederlandse COURANT** Oranje Ball and **D.C.C.O.O.** Festival Queen Pageant, Hamilton Convention Centre and **FM 108** Youth Dance, Hamilon Convention Centre (Doors open at 7 p.m.) *Evening:* **Dutch Film Festival** , Broadway Cinema "The Vanishing" (9 p.m.) also on Sunday, June 16, at 7 p.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL
THE DUTCH HERITAGE GROUP INC.
Tel: (416) 333-1913 Fax: (416) 333-5958

With thanks to God you are invited to celebrate in the retirement of 40 years in the ministry of

REV. JACOB KUNTZ

Dinner & Program

on June 22, 1991, at 5:30 p.m.
Woodland Christian High School
R.R. #1, Breslau, Ont.
Tickets are $14.00 per person.

Contact: **Olga & Arend Steenbeek,**
92 Pinedale Dr.,
Kitchener, ON N2E 1J7
(519) 579-0082

REUNION
Reformed school in Noordeschut, the Netherlands

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Reformed (Gereformeerde) school of Noordeschut a reunion will be held of former pupils on **August 31, 1991.** The event will take place from 2 p.m. until 11:30 p.m. A special service will be held the next day with cooperation of former pupils. Former students can order a lunch (f14,-) and/or an anniversary booklet (f30,-) by sending the money by July 1 to number 480753539 of the AMRO Bank of Hoogeveen under the name of "reuniecommissie."

For further information telephone:
Harja Seinen-Bakker at 011-31-05284-2988

BRANTFORD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

cordially invites you to attend the dedication ceremonies for the recently completed addition to its school building.

The ceremonies will take place on:

Saturday, June 1, 1991 - Starting at 2:00 P.M.
Guest Speaker: Jake Ellens
Open House from 10:00 - 12:00 A.M.

For further information call BCS at **(519) 752-0433.**

THE
Family Christian Bookstore
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U kunt zich nu abonneren op deze prekendienst, b.v.:
a) één cassette iedere week;
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Prijs $3,00 per cassette
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Voor inlichtingen schrijf naar:

Jack & Lenie Brouwer
27 Alpaca Drive
Scarborough, ON
M1J 2Z8
of bel (416) 431-7792

Luister naar het programma ZINGEND GELOVEN
Elke Zaterdag, 8 uur 's morgens
CHIN FM 101

Crossword puzzle is on page 19.

ADDRESS CHANGE

Please use this form and allow four weeks for processing request.

Attach your present label here.

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L2W 1A1

Events/News

Christian Reformed relief group responds to world disasters

BURLINGTON, Ont. (CRWRC — We have been overwhelmed these past few weeks with the natural and political disasters that are occurring in our world. There has not been a time when we as Christians have been challenged to minister to as many disasters in different parts of the world as we are today.

All of the following responses will require your support. The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) expects to spend $300,000 with about *$100,000 coming from Canada*. The lion's share will be for Bangladesh. "We would ask that you bring this need to the members of your church," says CRWRC Canada director Ray Elgersma. "We covet your prayers for the people affected by disaster and for our staff as they are challenged to respond."

CRWRC's aid for Iraq has included the following:

- $65,000 (Can.) worth of foodstuffs and medical supplies sent to Jordan for refugees from Iraq;
- 500 care packages sent to Iraq;
- Between 12,000 and 15,000 blankets collected from American CRC members and sent to Kurdish refugees;
- $2,400 worth of food, medicine, and clothing purchased from within Jordan in co-operation with the Mennonite Central Committee;
- $3,500 for a food for work program in a Jordanian village;
- $4,500 for medical supplies at a clinic in Northern Jordan;
- $1,200 for food and clothing for the blind;
- a medical, management, and construction person to work with the Kurds with plans to send two to seven more medical volunteers working with Global Partners in Iraq for three months;
- investigation of potential ways to deliver a Canadian Foodgrains Bank shipment of 500 metric tons of wheat.

In Bangladesh:

- 1000 metric tons of wheat are in the process of being shipped to Bangladesh through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Initial response will be food and tube wells;
- planning in-country response using CRWRC staff and Bengali partners in similar fashion to the agency's 1988 response when it built 2,153 homes, and in 1986 when it provided fishing boats and nets;

In Costa Rica:

- CRWRC staff are conducting a needs assessment and expect disaster teams to begin work shortly. Emphasis will be on providing clean water and constructing community facilities.

In Sudan and Ethiopia:

A hunger disaster is occurring in both Sudan and Ethiopia. Needs in these countries are being overshadowed by the Middle East and Bangladesh disasters.

- participation in a 22,000 metric ton shipment of food-grains to Ethiopia via the Canadian Foodgrains Bank;
- participation in a planned 30,000 metric ton food shipment to the north of Sudan;
- staff in East Africa are making final plans for a food grains shipment to the south of Sudan.

In the United States:

- planning for disaster response teams to flooding in Texas and tornadoes in Kansas and Illinois.

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WALLACEBURG
Chr. Reformed Church
July 12, 13 & 14

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Sat. - Brunch and Picnic
Sun. - Celebration service with Rev. C. Tuyl

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(519) 677-4479

Samaritan's purse plans million dollar aid shipment to Bangladesh

BOONE, N.C., (SP) — Responding to the urgent needs in Bangladesh, Samaritan's Purse, headed by Franklin Graham, has shipped 60 tons of clothing and blankets to Chittagong. In addition to this initial shipment, Samaritan's Purse has readied for air freight over one million dollars worth of fever-reducing medicines such as acetaminophen, as well as vital oral rehydration fluids.

"It is estimated that over 200,000 people were killed when the cyclone hit, but many thousands more are dying in the aftermath," Franklin Graham said. "Right now, starvation, cholera and diarrhea are already beginning to take their toll in Bangladesh. We can't stop natural disasters, but we can be ready to respond quickly."

According to Sean Campbell, director of Samaritan's Purse-Canada, contacts in Bangladesh say that over 10 million people have been affected by the disaster — making this the most destructive cyclone in that country since 1970 when one-half million people were killed.

Will stay for long-term rebuilding

Graham's organization also plans to help the Bangladeshi people in their long-term rebuilding needs. A program is in development which would provide building materials and livestock such as goats and chickens to the areas hit hardest by the 145 mile-per-hour cyclone.

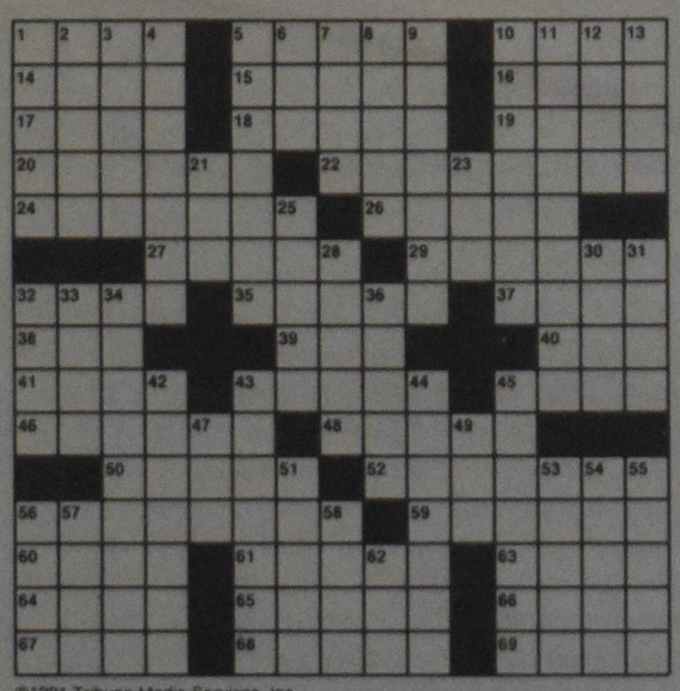
Samaritan's Purse has been involved in Bangladesh for 20 years, working regularly with the evangelical churches and mission agencies there.

Graham noted that international relief agencies are taxed with severe disasters on several continents — earthquakes in the Soviet Union and Central America, refugees in the Persian Gulf region, starvation in Africa and now the cyclone in Bangladesh.

Samaritan's Purse is a Christian mission organization meeting emergency needs among missionaries, national church groups and the people they serve. Samaritan's Purse has been helping others since 1970. For further information on how to help the Bangladeshi people, please write or contact Samaritan's Purse, Box 20100, Calgary Place, Calgary, AB T2P 4J2; telephone: (403) 250-6565.

Weekly puzzle

by Al Becker



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ACROSS
1 Make ready
5 Devastation
10 Ski lift
14 Abnormal respiratory sound
15 Bell town
16 "Othello" name
17 Other
18 Polish city
19 Nile queen for short
20 Kind of staircase
22 Seeped
24 Fleeced
26 Climb over
27 Fill the tank
29 Warns
32 Fourth dimension
35 Pitch
37 Disastrous
38 Sharp — tack
39 Building wing
40 Wee bite
41 Ballet move
43 Call to service
45 Tobacco curing oven
46 Mailer
48 Line of work
50 Fathers
52 Baited
56 Rundown buildings
59 LA-TX border river
60 Jai —
61 A Shore
63 "— for All Seasons"
64 Dressing for short
65 A Muse
66 Baltic native
67 Org.
68 Storehouse
69 Caustics

DOWN
1 Urge
2 — W. Emerson
3 Famous cow
4 List of nobles
5 Unlucky
6 Hubbub
7 Expansive
8 Lulus
9 Shaped like a tepee
10 Amused
11 "Swan Lake" star
12 Writer James
13 Cross
21 Parseghian
23 Stockton's state: abbr.
25 One who deceives
28 Rice dish
30 Speaker of baseball
31 Fall mo.
32 Bugle call
33 Seagirt land
34 Chief supports
36 Fairylike
42 Printing
43 Feared
44 Golfer's first stroke
45 Weirdo
47 Flub
49 Meadow
51 Slender tapering part
53 Englishman
54 Maternal kin
55 Imprints
56 Hindu hero
57 Oh, woe!
58 Cinch
62 From — Z

Last week's puzzle

S	A	M	O	A	■	G	A	R	B	■	R	A	S	P
C	L	A	N	G	■	A	M	I	E	■	E	L	M	O
A	G	R	E	E	■	B	O	N	D	■	D	I	A	L
B	A	T	O	N	R	O	U	G	E	■	H	A	R	E
■	■	■	■	D	A	R	N	■	C	H	E	S	T	S
A	N	D	E	A	N	■	T	A	K	E	R	■	■	■
D	O	O	R	■	G	I	S	T	■	F	R	U	M	P
D	E	S	I	R	E	S	■	R	E	T	I	R	E	E
S	L	I	C	E	■	A	K	I	N	■	N	A	T	O
■	■	■	T	A	R	S	I	■	R	A	G	L	A	N
E	U	C	H	R	E	■	N	O	O	N	■	■	■	■
A	L	O	E	■	R	E	D	B	L	O	O	D	E	D
S	T	A	R	■	F	E	L	L	E	■	D	R	A	P	E
E	R	T	E	■	A	L	E	S	■	E	A	V	E	S
S	A	I	D	■	D	A	D	E	■	S	L	E	E	K

Calendar of Events

May 24-25	Drs. R. C. Sproul, president of Ligonier Ministries of Canada, speaks at the Airport Hilton Hotel, **Toronto**, Ont. Theme: "The Majesty of Christ." For info. call 1-800-344-9499.
May 25	Anniversary dinner of the Springdale Calvinette Club, 6 p.m., Springdale Fellowship Hall, **Springdale**, Ont. For info. call Carrie Kooy at (416) 775-2421.
May 25	Conferring of degrees on sixth graduation class, 2 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Commencement address by Dr. John Bernbaum. Admission free.
May 25	Annual A.B.C. sale, from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., at Shalom Manor, **Grimsby**, Ont. Crafts, baking, white elephant table, plants, etc. Dutch hospitality at its best!
May 25 - June 15	Concert by Heather & Helen, assisted by Jack Rintjema and Steve Marfisi. Christian contemporary music. All events start 7:30 p.m. **May 25:** Bethel CRC, **London; June 1:** HDCH, **Hamilton; June 15:** Calvin CRC, **Ottawa**. Admission at the door. Portion of proceeds to CRWRC.
May 26	City-wide hymn sing, 8 p.m., First CRC, **Sarnia**, Ont.
May 31	Serge LeClerc, street kid, drug dealer, ex-convict, and now, by the grace of God, a Christian. Hear his testimony and challenge at 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **Cambridge**, Ont. For info. call (519) 623-8151.
June 1	Dedication ceremonies for new addition to Brantford Christian School, **Brantford**, Ont. Starts 2 p.m. Speaker: Jake Ellens.
June 2	Dutch service at the CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont., 3 p.m., led by Rev. Ralph Koops.
June 3-7	"Milk & Honey Summer Festival," at Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. For details call (416) 648-2131.
June 4	Music for choir, organ, piano and trumpet with Paul Grimwood conducting. Concert starts at 8 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. For tickets calls (416) 648-2131.
June 4-6	"Christianity and the Classics II - Beginnings," a conference at ICS, **Toronto**, Ont. Speakers: Wendy Helleman, Al Wolters, William Rowe and others. For registration call (416) 979-2331.
June 5	"De Hollandse Dag in Kingston," at 10 a.m., First CRC, **Kingston**, Ont. Speaker: Rev. Dirk Velthuizen. For info. call (613) 384-2493.
June 7	Concert by "Acappella" (from Paris, Tennessee) at 7:30 p.m., Covenant CRC, **St. Catharines**, Ont. For tickets and info. call Martin Lensink (416) 937-1078 or Eileen Vanden Bogert (416) 934-4327.
June 8	Mariahout-Lieshout (the Netherlands) Town Reunion, will be held at **Erin**, Ont. Join the festivities! Call (416) 224-5211.
June 12	"De Hollandse Dag in Moorefield," in the Community Centre, **Moorefield**, Ont. Starts at 10 a.m. Speaker: Rev. J.G. Klomps.
June 15	"Grunneger Picnic," at 10 a.m., Grand River Conservation Area, **Rockwood**, Ont.
June 21-22	"Rumours of Glory: Bruce Cockburn & Christian Faith in a post-modern world." At ICS, **Toronto**, Ont. This seminar will be led by J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh. For registration call (416) 979-2331.
June 26	Annual picnic of "The Cypress Gardens Winter Ministry," at 10 a.m., Bronte Creek Provincial Park (take exit 109 off QEW). Bring lunch!
July 3	"De Hollandse Dag in Mount Brydges," at 10 a.m., Caradoc Community Centre, **Mount Brydges**, Ont. Speaker: Rev. J. Joosse. Bring lunch!
July 5-6	"The People and the Book: Christian Origins and the N.T.," a conference at ICS, **Toronto**, Ont. Speaker NT scholar N. Thomas Wright of Oxford University. For registration call (416) 979-2331.

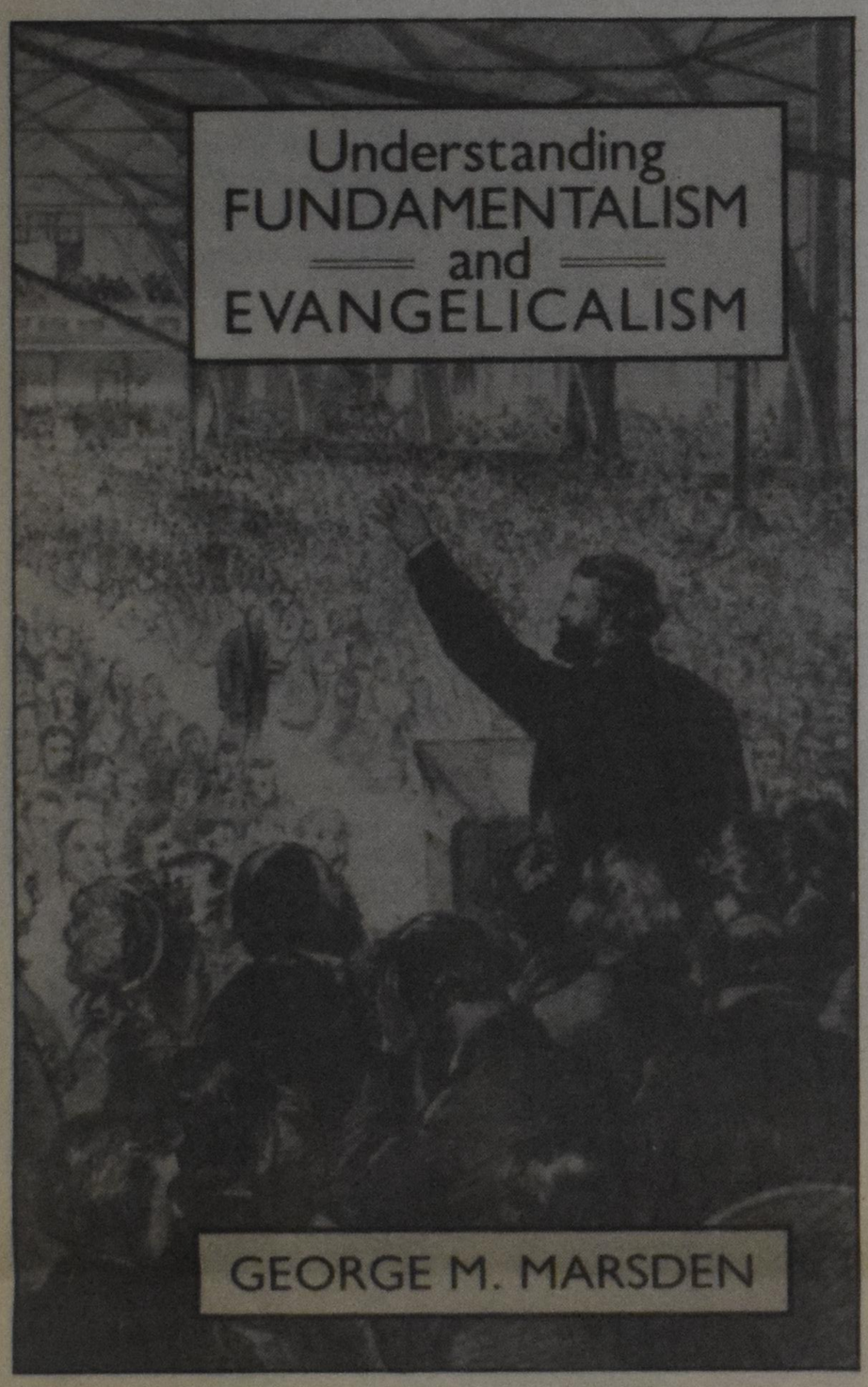
Send your questions to Peter and Marja c/o Calvinist Contact. Confidentiality is assured.

Books

Robert VanderVennen, book review editor

Church history

Examining the fundamentalist and evangelical movements



Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism, by George M. Marsden. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991. ISBN 0-8028-0539-6. Softcover, 208 pp., $16.95. Reviewed by Robert VanderVennen.

This book gives an overview of the history of American fundamentalism and evangelicalism, with interpretations of two controversies with the larger culture: politics, and views of science.

Marsden sees a fundamentalist as "an evangelical who is angry about something." That anger is directed most often to liberal theology in churches, or to changes in cultural values usually associated with secular humanism. Fundamentalists, alive as a group in America since the 1920s, are conservatives who are willing to fight, he asserts.

Evangelicals, like fundamentalists, hold to the saving work of Christ on the cross and the need to trust him for eternal salvation, but they are broader in scope. Evangelicalism is a style as well as a set of beliefs.

In his historical overview Marsden sketches the rise of fundamentalism in the 19th century when simple biblical faith was strong in America. The great revivals of Dwight L. Moody and Billy Sunday called people from degeneration to regeneration. The Sunday School movement took off and foreign missionaries covered the globe. The stress of liberalism and evolutionism rallied the fervent to major evangelistic efforts. Dispensationalism, Holiness and Pentecostalism were new movements, each with an "anti-liberal" emphasis on the dramatic intervention of the supernatural.

By the end of World War I fundamentalists were shooting words at liberals. Fundamentalism changed to more local than nationwide action after the defeat of Catholic Al Smith for the U.S. presidency in 1928.

Billy Graham broke with fundamentalists and, together with Carl F. H. Henry, rallied evangelicals. Evangelicals are outsiders to the most sophisticated modern culture, though they have developed an impressive scholarly educational and publishing effort, Marsden says.

Warfield's attack on Kuyper

In his evaluation of evangelical and fundamentalist history Marsden cites an attack by B. B. Warfield on Abraham Kuyper's position that there are two kinds of science, one for believers and one for unbelievers. Warfield held that science was objective, unified and cumulative, serving everyone. Marsden notes that while Kuyper criticized the French Revolution, Americans shared the spirit of their own revolution. Americans with their predominately Calvinist religious heritage, mostly championed the Enlightenment with its ideals of order, balance and religious compromise stemming from Scottish "Common Sense" thought. They accepted Newton's and Bacon's thinking about science and developed a cordial relation between Christianity and the scientifically-based culture.

But America's evangelicals were also developing a rather dualistic or semi-deistic world-view, Marsden says. Thus they did not reject out of hand Darwin's evolutionistic ideas of the 1860s until they came to see atheism in the outlook of many of its supporters. Today evangelical scholars are divided into two camps, says Marsden, the Kuyperians and the Warfieldians.

Marsden includes a chapter, reprinted from a 1983 publication, entitled *Why Creation Science?* He carefully analyses this as a person who does not share the "creation science" point of view. The last chapter is an appraisal of the legacy of J. Gresham Machen.

This valuable book deals with American religious history but Canadians can learn from it about themselves, too. Free trade is not limited to the tangible goods we buy. I think there are both evangelicals and fundamentalists in Canada. Do you know any Christian who lives in a state of anger about religious matters?

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Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

When God lets us down (II)

"Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me? ... The darkness is my closest friend" (Ps. 88:14, 18).

There are a lot of things in life that hurt us; we each carry the unique scars of our personal wounds.

But here is the thing we'd probably all put at the top: some form of betrayal. A friend who turns her back on us. A spouse who leaves us. A community that disowns us.

Almost nothing in this world hurts more than that. We page through history and find the deepest scars written in the words and actions of betrayal. Caesar turns around in the threatening crowd and loses his will to fight when he meets the eye of Brutus: *Et tu, Brute?* Judas meets his friend Jesus with a kiss that means love and death.

Nothing hurts us more than this: to be betrayed by the one we counted on, the one we cared for, the one we loved. To feel the knife in the back, and then to turn and see the face of the one we trusted, the one we leaned on, the one to whom we felt so close.

The dark face of God

And now, take it one step further. What if you turned around and the face you saw behind you was the face of God? What if the one who betrayed you was God himself? How would you cope with that?

It's tough to think about, isn't it? But isn't that what we find here in Psalm 88? Listen again to these words: You *have put me in the lowest pit....* You *have overwhelmed me with all your waves.* You *have taken from me my closest friends and have made me repulsive to them.*

Those are words of betrayal, and they're spoken to God. "I cry to you for help..." and *you* reject me! What do you do with that? You know what most people do? They stop going to church. They give up their faith. They forget about God: "If he's going to treat me this way, then he's out of my life!"

A tragic story

Probably no one has put it better than the acclaimed American novelist Peter DeVries. He grew up in a Christian Reformed home in Chicago. And he has spent his life trying to sort out where God was for him.

His most powerful novel is also his most tragic. It's called *The Blood of the Lamb.* In it De Vries follows the career of Don Wanderhope. Don's family believes in God. They believe God holds all things in his hand. They're sure that God will always be there for them.

But Don doesn't find it to be that way. One tragedy after another dogs his heels till he wishes God wouldn't pay so much attention to him. Every look of God seems to be a frown, every word from God a judgment, every action a punishment.

The climax of the story comes when Don's wife bears them a daughter before she commits suicide. Little Carol becomes the one spot of grace in her father's otherwise troubled life. Don has struggled a lot with his faith through the years. Now, when Carol gets sick and is diagnosed with leukemia, he goes back to church. He prays for Carol. He begs God to heal her. He pleads with Jesus to touch her life.

But she dies anyway. And when Don finally leaves the hospital he's carrying the birthday cake they were going to share together. He walks past the church of St. Catharine. Hanging over the door is a life-sized statue of Christ on the cross. He takes the cake in his hand and throws it at Jesus in anger. And the icing drips from the face like blood.

That's his final prayer. That's what he thinks of the God who betrayed him. Have you ever been there with him?

A lot of us have. It's a refrain I've heard over and over again throughout my years as a pastor: *Why did God let this happen? How could God do this to us? Why doesn't God listen to my prayers?* It's really the problem of Psalm 88 all over again.

Nothing I can say will take away your pain. When we're there with Heman, the man who wrote this Psalm, when we're there in the "lowest pit, in the darkest depths" with Heman, no one can order us back up into the light.

But what I'd like to do in the coming weeks is ask you four questions we need to ask when we feel betrayed by God.

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.